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# THE HEPTAMERON

OF THE TALES OF

## Margaret, Queen of Navarre

*IN FIVE VOLUMES*

VOLUME THE FOURTH

The translation is from the authentic text of M. Le Roux de Lincy, and was first issued by the Society of English Bibliophilists in 1894.

The Essay by Professor George Saintsbury, M.A., is also given, and the whole of the important Notes and Appendices.

The Illustrations are reproductions from the copper-plates engraved for the Berne edition by Longeuil, Halbou, and other eminent French artists of the eighteenth century.

# THE HEPTAMERON

OF THE TALES OF

## Margaret, Queen of Navarre

*Translated into English from the Authentic Text of M. le Roux de Lincy*

WITH

## AN ESSAY UPON THE HEPTAMERON

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

Also the Original Seventy-three Full-page Engravings

Designed by S. FREUDENBERG

And One Hundred and Fifty Head and Tail Pieces

by DUNKER

*IN FIVE VOLUMES*

VOLUME THE FOURTH

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# FOURTH DAY.

*On the Fourth Day are chiefly told Tales of the virtuous patience and long suffering of Ladies to win over their husbands; and of the prudence that Men have used towards Women to save the honour of their families and lineage.*

## *FOURTH DAY.*

### PROLOGUE.

THE Lady Oisille, as was her excellent custom, rose up on the morrow very much earlier than the others, and meditating upon her book of Holy Scripture, awaited the company which, little by little, assembled together again. And the more slothful of them excused themselves in the words of the Bible, saying, "I have a wife, and therefore could not come so quickly."[1] In this wise it came to pass that Hircan and his wife Parlamente found the reading of the lesson already begun. Oisille, however, knew right well how to pick out the passage in the Scriptures, which reproves those who neglect the hearing of the Word, and she not only read the text, but also addressed to them such excellent and pious exhortations that it was impossible to weary of listening to her.

The reading ended, Parlamente said to her—

"I felt sorry for my slothfulness when I came in,

[1] "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."—*St. Luke* xiv. 20.—M.

but since my error has led you to speak to me in such excellent fashion, my laziness has profited me double, for I have had rest of body by sleeping longer, and satisfaction of spirit by hearing your godly discourse."

"Well," said Oisille, "let us for penance go to mass and pray Our Lord to give us both will and power to fulfil His commandments; and then may He command us according to His own good pleasure."

As she was saying these words, they reached the church, where they piously heard mass. And afterwards they sat down to table, where Hircan failed not to laugh at the slothfulness of his wife. After dinner they withdrew to rest and study their parts,[2] and when the hour was come, they all found themselves at the wonted spot.

Then Oisille asked Hircan to whom he would give his vote to begin the day.

"If my wife," said he, "had not begun yesterday, I should have given her my vote, for although I always thought that she loved me more than any man alive, she has further proved to me this morning that she loves me better than God or His Word, seeing that she neglected your excellent reading to bear me company. However, since I cannot give my vote to the discreetest lady of the company, I will present it to Geburon, who is the discreetest among the men; and I beg that he will in no wise spare the monks."

[2] Meaning what they had to relate. The French word is *rolle* from *rotulus*.—M.

"It was not necessary to beg that of me," said Geburon; "I was not at all likely to forget them. Only a short while ago I heard Monsieur de Saint-Vincent, Ambassador of the Emperor, tell a story of them which is well worthy of being rememorated, and I will now relate it to you."

S. Freudenberg inv. L. Halbou Sculp.

## TALE XXXI.

*A monastery of Grey Friars was burned down, with the monks that were in it, as a perpetual memorial of the cruelty practised by one among them that was in love with a lady.*

IN the lands subject to the Emperor Maximilian of Austria[1] there was a monastery of Grey Friars that was held in high repute, and nigh to it stood the house of a gentleman who was so kindly disposed to these monks that he could withhold nothing from them, in order to share in the benefits of their fastings and disciplines. Among the rest there was a tall and handsome friar whom the said gentleman had taken to be his confessor, and who had as much authority

[1] Maximilian I., grandfather of Charles V. and Ferdinand I., and Emperor of Germany from 1494 to 1519.—ED.

in the gentleman's house as the gentleman himself. This friar, seeing that the gentleman's wife was as beautiful and prudent as it was possible to be, fell so deeply in love with her that he lost all appetite for both food and drink, and all natural reason as well. One day, thinking to work his end, he went all alone to the house, and not finding the gentleman within, asked the lady whither he was gone. She replied that he was gone to an estate where he proposed remaining during two or three days, but that if the friar had business with him, she would despatch a man expressly to him. The friar said no to this, and began to walk to and fro in the house like one with a weighty matter in his mind.

When he had left the room, the lady said to one of her women (and there were but two)—

"Go after the good father and find out what he wants, for I judge by his countenance that he is displeased."

The serving-woman went to the courtyard and asked the friar whether he desired aught, whereat he answered that he did, and, drawing her into a corner, he took a dagger which he carried in his sleeve, and thrust it into her throat. Just after he had done this, there came into the courtyard a mounted servant who had been gone to receive the rent of a farm. As soon as he

had dismounted he saluted the friar, who embraced him, and while doing so thrust the dagger into the back part of his neck. And thereupon he closed the castle gate.

The lady, finding that her serving-woman did not return, was astonished that she should remain so long with the friar, and said to the other—

"Go and see why your fellow-servant does not come back."

The woman went, and as soon as the good father saw her, he drew her aside into a corner and did to her as he had done to her companion. Then, finding himself alone in the house, he came to the lady, and told her that he had long been in love with her, and that the hour was now come when she must yield him obedience.

The lady, who had never suspected aught of this, replied—

"I am sure, father, that were I so evilly inclined, you would be the first to cast a stone at me."

"Come out into the courtyard," returned the monk, "and you will see what I have done."

When she beheld the two women and the man lying dead, she was so terrified that she stood like a statue, without uttering a word. The villain, who did not seek merely an hour's delight, would not take her by force, but forthwith said to her—

"Mistress, be not afraid; you are in the hands of him who, of all living men, loves you the most."

So saying, he took off his long robe, beneath which he wore a shorter one, which he gave to the lady, telling her that if she did not take it, she should be numbered with those whom she saw lying lifeless before her eyes.

More dead than alive already, the lady resolved to feign obedience, both to save her life, and to gain time, as she hoped, for her husband's return. At the command of the friar, she set herself to put off her head-dress as slowly as she was able; and when this was done, the friar, heedless of the beauty of her hair, quickly cut it off. Then he caused her to take off all her clothes except her chemise, and dressed her in the smaller robe he had worn, he himself resuming the other, which he was wont to wear; then he departed thence with all imaginable speed, taking with him the little friar he had coveted so long.

But God, who pities the innocent in affliction, beheld the tears of this unhappy lady, and it so happened that her husband, having arranged matters more speedily than he had expected, was now returning home by the same road by which she herself was departing. However,

when the friar perceived him in the distance, he said to the lady—

"I see your husband coming this way. I know that if you look at him he will try to take you out of my hands. Go, then, before me, and turn not your head in his direction; for, if you make the faintest sign, my dagger will be in your throat before he can deliver you."

As he was speaking, the gentleman came up, and asked him whence he was coming.

"From your house," replied the other, "where I left my lady in good health, and waiting for you."

The gentleman passed on without observing his wife, but a servant who was with him, and who had always been wont to foregather with one of the friar's comrades named Brother John, began to call to his mistress, thinking, indeed, that she was this Brother John. The poor woman, who durst not turn her eyes in the direction of her husband, answered not a word. The servant, however, wishing to see her face, crossed the road, and the lady, still without making any reply, signed to him with her eyes, which were full of tears.

The servant then went after his master and said—"Sir, as I crossed the road I took note of the friar's companion. He is not Brother John,

but is very like my lady, your wife, and gave me a pitiful look with eyes full of tears."

The gentleman replied that he was dreaming, and paid no heed to him; but the servant persisted, entreating his master to allow him to go back, whilst he himself waited on the road, to see if matters were as he thought. The gentleman gave him leave, and waited to see what news he would bring him. When the friar heard the servant calling out to Brother John, he suspected that the lady had been recognised, and with a great, iron-bound stick that he carried, he dealt the servant so hard a blow in the side that he knocked him off his horse. Then, leaping upon his body, he cut his throat.

The gentleman, seeing his servant fall in the distance, thought that he had met with an accident, and hastened back to assist him. As soon as the friar saw him, he struck him also with the iron-bound stick, just as he had struck the servant, and, flinging him to the ground, threw himself upon him. But the gentleman being strong and powerful, hugged the friar so closely that he was unable to do any mischief, and was forced to let his dagger fall. The lady picked it up, and, giving it to her husband, held the friar with all her strength by the hood. Then her husband dealt the friar several blows

with the dagger, so that at last he cried for mercy and confessed his wickedness. The gentleman was not minded to kill him, but begged his wife to go home and fetch their people and a cart, in which to carry the friar away. This she did, throwing off her robe, and running as far as her house in nothing but her shift, with her cropped hair.

The gentleman's men forthwith hastened to assist their master to bring away the wolf that he had captured. And they found this wolf in the road, on the ground, where he was seized and bound, and taken to the house of the gentleman, who afterwards had him brought before the Emperor's Court in Flanders, when he confessed his evil deeds.

And by his confession and by proofs procured by commissioners on the spot, it was found that a great number of gentlewomen and handsome wenches had been brought into the monastery in the same fashion as the friar of my story had sought to carry off this lady; and he would have succeeded but for the mercy of Our Lord, who ever assists those that put their trust in Him. And the said monastery was stripped of its spoils and of the handsome maidens that were found within it, and the monks were shut up in the building and burned with it, as an

everlasting memorial of this crime, by which we see that there is nothing more dangerous than love when it is founded upon vice, just as there is nothing more gentle or praiseworthy when it dwells in a virtuous heart.[2]

"I am very sorry, ladies, that truth does not provide us with stories as much to the credit of the Grey Friars as it does to the contrary. It would be a great pleasure to me, by reason of the love that I bear their Order, if I knew of one in which I could really praise them; but we have vowed so solemnly to speak the truth that, after hearing it from such as are well worthy of belief, I cannot but make it known to you. Nevertheless, I promise you that, whenever the monks shall accomplish a memorable and glorious deed, I will be at greater pains to exalt it than I have been in relating the present truthful history."

"In good faith, Geburon," said Oisille, "that was a love which might well have been called cruelty."

[2] Queen Margaret states (*ante*, p. 5) that this tale was told by M. de St.-Vincent, ambassador of Charles V., and seems to imply that the incident recorded in it was one of recent occurrence. The same story may be found, however, in most of the collections of early *fabliaux*. See *Œuvres de Rutebeuf*, vol. i. p. 260 (*Frère Denise*), Legrand d'Aussy's *Fabliaux*, vol. iv. p. 383, and the *Recueil complet des Fabliaux*, Paris, 1878, vol. iii. p. 253. There is also some similarity between this tale and No. LX. of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. Estienne quotes it in his *Apologie pour Hérodote*, L'Estoile in his *Journal du règne de Henri III.* (*anno* 1577), Malespini uses it in his *Ducento Novelle* (No. 75), and it suggested to Lafontaine his *Cordeliers de Catalogne*.—L. and M.

"I am astonished," said Simontault, "that he was patient enough not to take her by force when he saw her in her shift, and in a place where he might have mastered her."

"He was not an epicure, but a glutton," said Saffredent. "He wanted to have his fill of her every day, and so was not minded to amuse himself with a mere taste."

"That was not the reason," said Parlamente. "Understand that a lustful man is always timorous, and the fear that he had of being surprised and robbed of his prey led him, wolf-like, to carry off his lamb that he might devour it at his ease."

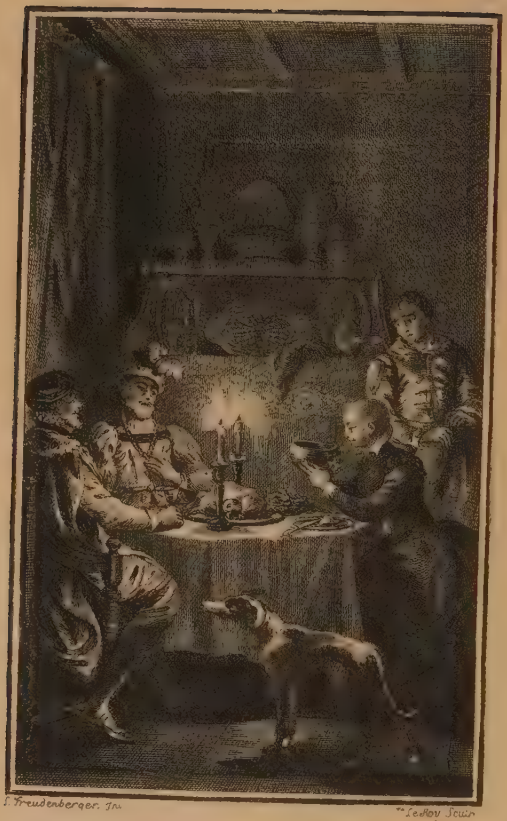
"For all that," said Dagoucin, "I cannot believe that he loved her, or that the virtuous god of love could dwell in so base a heart."

"Be that as it may," said Oisille, "he was well punished, and I pray God that like attempts may meet with the same chastisement. But to whom will you give your vote?"

"To you, madam," replied Geburon; "you will, I know, not fail to tell us a good story."

"Since it is my turn," said Oisille, "I will relate to you one that is indeed excellent, seeing that the adventure befel in my own day, and before the eyes of him who told it to me. You are, I am sure, aware that death ends all our woes, and this being so, it may be termed our happiness and tranquil rest. It is, therefore, a misfortune if a man desires death and cannot obtain it, and so the most grievous

punishment that can be given to a wrongdoer is not death, but a continual torment, great enough to render death desirable, but withal too slight to bring it nearer. And this was how a husband used his wife, as you shall hear."



S. Freudenberger. Jn.

Le Roy Sculp

## TALE XXXII.

*Bernage, learning in what patience and humility a German lady submitted to the strange penance laid upon her for her unchastity by her husband, so persuaded the latter that he forgot the past, showed pity to his wife, and, taking her back again, afterwards had by her some very handsome children.*

KING CHARLES, eighth of the name, sent into Germany a gentleman called Bernage, Lord of Sivray, near Amboise,[1] who to make good speed spared not to travel both by day and night. In this wise he came very late one evening to a

[1] Bernage, Bernaige, or Vernaiges, as the name is diversely written in the MSS. of the *Heptameron*, was in 1495 equerry to Charles VIII., a post which brought him an annual salary of 300 livres.—See Godefroy's *Histoire de Charles VIII.*, p. 705. Civray, near Chenonceaux, on the Cher, was a fief of the barony of Amboise. In 1482 we find a certain John Goussart doing homage for it to the crown.—Archives Nationales, Section Domaniale, côte 3801.—L.

gentleman's castle, where he asked for lodging, a request which was not granted him without great difficulty.

However, when the gentleman came to know that he was servant to so great a King, he went to him and begged him not to take the churlishness of his servants in bad part, since he was obliged to keep his house thus closed on account of certain of his wife's kinsfolk who sought to do him hurt. Bernage then told him the nature of his mission, wherein the gentleman offered to serve the interests of the King his master, so far as in him lay; and he forthwith led Bernage into the house, where he lodged and entertained him honourably.

It was the hour for supper, and the gentleman led him into a handsome room, hung with beautiful tapestry, where, as soon as the meats were served, he saw come from behind the hangings the most beautiful woman it were possible to behold; though her head was shorn and she was dressed in black garments of the German fashion.

After the gentleman had washed his hands with Bernage, water was borne to the lady, who also washed hers and then sat down at the end of the table without speaking to the gentleman, or he to her. The Lord de Bernage looked very

closely at her, and thought her one of the most beautiful women he had ever seen, except that her face was very pale, and its expression very sad.

After eating a little, she asked for drink, which was brought to her by a servant in a most marvellous vessel, for it was a death's head, the eye-holes of which were closed with silver; and from this she drank two or three times. When she had supped, the lady washed her hands, made a reverence to the lord of the house, and retired again behind the tapestry without speaking to any one. Bernage was exceedingly amazed at this strange sight, and became very melancholy and thoughtful.

The gentleman, who perceived this, then said to him—

"I perceive that you are astonished at what you have seen at this table; but for the sake of the excellence that I find in you I will explain the matter, so that you may not think I could show such cruelty without reasons of great weight. The lady whom you saw is my wife; I loved her more than ever man loved woman, insomuch that in order to marry her I forgot all fear, and brought her hither in defiance of her relations. On her part, she showed me so many tokens of love that I would have risked ten thousand lives in

bringing her hither, to her delight and mine. And here we lived for a while in such peace and gladness that I deemed myself the happiest gentleman in Christendom.

"But it came to pass, upon my undertaking a journey which my honour compelled me to make, she forgot her honour, conscience and love for me to such a degree as to fall in love with a young gentleman whom I had brought up in this house, and this I thought I could perceive when I returned home again. Nevertheless, the love I bore her was so great that I was not able to mistrust her, until at last experience opened my eyes and made me see what I dreaded more than death, whereupon my love for her was turned to frenzy and despair in such wise that I watched her closely, and one day, while feigning to walk abroad, I hid myself in the room in which she now dwells.

"Thither she withdrew soon after my departure, and sent for the young gentleman, whom I saw come in with such familiarity as should have been mine alone. But when I saw him about to get upon the bed beside her, I sprang out, seized him in her very arms, and slew him. And as my wife's crime seemed to me so great that death would not suffice to punish it, I laid upon her a penalty which she must hold, I think,

to be more bitter than death; and this penalty was to shut her up in the room to which she was wont to retire to take her greatest pleasures in the company of him for whom she had more love than she had for me; and there I further placed in a cupboard all her lover's bones, hanging there even as precious things are hung up in a cabinet.

"That she may not lose the memory of this villain I cause her to be served with his skull,[2] in place of a cup, when she is eating and drinking at table, and this always in my presence, so that she may behold, alive, him whom her guilt has made her mortal enemy, and dead, through love of her, him whose love she did prefer to mine. And in this wise, at dinner and at supper, she sees the two things that must be most displeasing to her, to wit, her living enemy, and her dead lover; and all this through her own great sinfulness.

"In other matters I treat her as I do myself, save that she goes shorn; for an array of hair beseems not the adulterous, nor a veil the unchaste.

[2] It will be remembered that the Lombard King Alboin forced his wife Rosamond to drink his health out of a goblet which had been made from the skull of her father Cunimond, sovereign of the Gepidæ. To revenge herself for this affront, Rosamond caused her husband to be murdered one night during his sleep in his palace at Pavia.—ED.

For this reason is her hair cut, showing that she has lost the honour of virginity and purity. Should it please you to take the trouble to see her, I will lead you to her."

To this Bernage willingly consented, and going downstairs they found her in a very handsome apartment, seated all alone in front of the fire. The gentleman drew aside a curtain that hung in front of a large cupboard, wherein could be seen hanging a dead man's bones. Bernage greatly longed to speak to the lady, but durst not do so for fear of the husband. The gentleman, perceiving this, thereupon said to him—

"If it be your pleasure to say anything to her, you will see what manner of grace and speech is hers."

Then said Bernage to her—

"Lady, your patience is as great as your torment. I hold you to be the most unhappy woman alive."

With tears in her eyes, and with the humblest grace imaginable, the lady answered—

"Sir, I acknowledge my offence to have been so great that all the woes that the lord of this house (for I am not worthy to call him husband) may be pleased to lay upon me are nothing in comparison with the grief I feel at having offended him."

So saying, she began to weep bitterly. The gentleman took Bernage by the arm and led him away.

On the following morning Bernage took his leave, in order to proceed on the mission that the King had given him. However, in bidding the gentleman farewell, he could not refrain from saying to him—

"Sir, the love I bear you, and the honour and friendship that you have shown me in your house, constrain me to tell you that, having regard to the deep penitence of your unhappy wife, you should, in my opinion, take compassion upon her. You are, moreover, young and have no children, and it would be a great pity that so fair a lineage should come to an end, and that those who, perhaps, have no love for you, should become your heirs."

The gentleman, who had resolved that he would never more speak to his wife, pondered a long time on the discourse held to him by the Lord de Bernage, and at last recognised that he had spoken truly, and promised him that, if his wife should continue in her present humility, he would at some time have pity upon her.

Accordingly Bernage departed on his mission, and when he had returned to his master, the

King, he told him the whole story, which the Prince, upon inquiry, found to be true. And as Bernage among other things had made mention of the lady's beauty, the King sent his painter, who was called John of Paris,[3] that he might make and bring him a living portrait of her, which, with her husband's consent, he did. And when she had long done penance, the gentleman, in his desire to have offspring,

[3] John Perréal, called "Jehan de Paris," was one of the most famous painters of the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. At the end of 1496 we find him resident at Lyons, and there enjoying considerable celebrity. From October 1498 to November 1499 he figures in the roll of officers of the royal household, as valet of the wardrobe, with a salary of 240 livres. In the royal stable accounts for 1508 he appears as receiving ten livres to defray the expense of keeping a horse during June and July that year. He is known to have painted the portrait and planned the obsequies of Philibert of Savoy in 1509; to have been sent to England in 1514 to paint a portrait of the Princess Mary, sister of Henry VIII., who married Louis XII.; and in 1515 to have had charge of all the decorative work connected with Louis XII.'s obsequies. In his *Légende des Vénitiens* (1509) John Le Maire de Belges praises Perréal's skill both in landscape and portrait painting, and describes him as a most painstaking and hardworking artist. He had previously referred to him in his *Temple d'Honneur et de Vertu* (1504) as being already at that period painter to the King. In the roll of the officers of Francis I.'s household (1522) Perréal's name takes precedence of that of the better known Jehannet Clouet, but it does not appear in that of 1529, about which time he would appear to have died. Shortly before that date he had designed some curious initial letters for the famous Parisian printer and bookseller, Tory. The Claud Perréal, "Lyonnese," whom Clement Marot commemorates in his 36th *Rondeau* would appear to have been a relative, possibly the son,

and in the pity that he felt for his wife who had submitted to this penance with so much humility, took her back again and afterwards had by her many handsome children.[4]

"If, ladies, all those whom a like adventure has befallen, were to drink out of similar vessels, I greatly fear that many a gilt cup would be turned into a death's head. May God keep us from such a fortune, for if His goodness do not restrain us, there is none among us but might do even worse; but if we trust in Him He will protect those who confess that they are not able to protect themselves. Those who confide in their own strength are in great danger of being tempted so far as to be constrained to acknowledge their frailty. Many have stumbled through pride in this way, while those who were reputed less discreet have been saved with honour. The old proverb says truly, 'Whatsoever God keeps is well kept.'"

"The punishment," said Parlamente, "was in my opinion a most reasonable one, for, just as the offence

of "Jehan de Paris."—See Léon de La Borde's *Renaissance des Arts*, vol. i., Pericaud ainé's *Notice sur Jean de Paris*, Lyons, 1858, and more particularly E. M. Bancel's *Jehan Perréal dit Jean de Paris, peintre et valet-de-chambre des rois Charles VIII. Louis XII., &c.* Paris, Launette, 1884.—L. and M.

[4] Brantôme refers to this tale, as an example of marital cruelty, in his *Vies des Dames Galantes*, Lalanne's edition, vol. ix. p. 38.—L.

was more than death, so ought the punishment to have been."

"I am not of your opinion," said Ennasuite. "I would rather see the bones of all my lovers hanging up in my cabinet than die on their account. There is no misdeed that cannot be repaired during life, but after death there is no reparation possible."

"How can shame be repaired?" said Longarine. "You know that, whatever a woman may do after a misdeed of that kind, she cannot repair her honour."

"I pray you," said Ennasuite, "tell me whether the Magdalen has not now more honour among men than her sister who continued a virgin?"[5]

"I acknowledge," said Longarine, "that we praise her for the great love she bore to Jesus Christ and for her deep repentance; yet the name of sinner clings to her."

"I do not care what name men may give me," said Ennasuite, "if only God forgive me, and my husband do the same. There is nothing for which I should be willing to die."

"If the lady loved her husband as she ought," said Dagoucin, "I am amazed that she did not die of sorrow on looking at the bones of the man whom her guilt had slain."

"Why, Dagoucin," returned Simontault, "have you

[5] Martha, sister of Lazarus and Mary Magdalen.—M.

still to learn that women know neither love nor even grief?"

"Yes, I have still to learn it," said Dagoucin, "for I have never made trial of their love, through fear of finding it less than I desired."

"Then you live on faith and hope," said Nomerfide, "as the plover does on air.[6] You are easily fed."

"I am content," he replied, "with the love that I feel within myself, and with the hope that there is the like in the hearts of the ladies. If I knew that my hopes were true, I should have such gladness that I could not endure it and live."

"Keep clear of the plague," said Geburon; "as for the other sickness you mention, I will warrant you against it. But I should like to know to whom the Lady Oisille will give her vote?"

"I give it," she said, "to Simontault, who I know will be sparing of none."

"That," he replied, "is as much as to say that I am somewhat given to slander; however, I will show you that reputed slanderers have spoken the truth. I am sure, ladies, that you are not so foolish as to believe all the tales that you are told, no matter what show of sanctity they may possess, if the proof of them be not clear beyond doubt. Many an abuse lurks even under the guise of a miracle, and for this

[6] This popular error was still so prevalent in France in the last century, that Buffon, in his Natural History, took the trouble to refute it at length.—B. J.

reason I am minded to tell you the story of a miracle that will prove no less to the honour of a pious Prince than to the shame of a wicked minister of the Church.

S. Freudenberg invenit. J.ᵉ Le Suy Sculp.

## TALE XXXIII.

*The hypocrisy of a priest who, under the cloak of sanctity, had got his sister with child, was discovered by the wisdom of the Count of Angoulême, by whose command they both were visited with punishment by law.*[1]

COUNT CHARLES of Angoulême, father of King Francis, a pious Prince and one that feared God, happened to be at Coignac when he was told that in a village called Cherues,[2] not far away, there dwelt a maiden who lived a marvellously austere life, and who, for all that, was now great with

[1] This tale is historical, the incidents must have occurred between 1480 and 1490.—L.

[2] Cherves-de-Cognac, now a large village of nearly 3000 inhabitants, within four miles of Cognac. The church, where some of the incidents recorded in the tale occurred, is still in existence. It dates from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and is surmounted by three cupolas.—ED.

child. She made no secret of the matter, but assured every one that she had never known a man and that she could not tell how such a fortune should have befallen her, unless indeed it were the work of the Holy Ghost. This explanation the people readily received, and knowing as they all did how virtuous she had been from her youth up, and how she had never given a single token of worldliness, they believed and deemed her a second Virgin Mary. She used to fast not only on the days commanded by the Church, but, from natural devotion, several times a week also; and she never stirred from the church whenever there was a service going on there. For these reasons she was held in such great repute among all the vulgar that every one came to see her as though she were a miracle, and those who succeeded in touching her dress deemed themselves fortunate indeed.

The priest of the parish was her brother; he was a man advanced in years and of very austere life, and was loved and reverenced by his parishioners, who held him for a holy man. He treated his sister with such harshness as to keep her shut up in a house, to the great discontent of all the people; and so greatly was the matter noised abroad that, as I have told

you, the story reached the ear of the Count. He perceived that the people were being deceived, and, wishing to set them right, sent a Master of Requests and an Almoner, two very worthy men, to learn the truth. These repaired to the spot and inquired into the matter with all possible diligence, addressing themselves for information to the priest, who, being weary of the whole affair, begged them to be present at an examination which he hoped to hold on the morrow.

Early the next morning the said priest chanted mass, his sister, who was now far gone with child, being present on her knees; and when mass was over, the priest took the "Corpus Domini," and in presence of the whole congregation said to his sister—

"Unhappy woman that you are, here is He who suffered death and agony for you, and in His presence I ask you whether, as you have ever affirmed to me, you are indeed a virgin?"

She boldly replied that she was.

"How is it possible that you can be with child and yet be still a virgin?"

"I can give no reason," she replied, "except that the grace of the Holy Ghost has wrought within me according to His good pleasure; nevertheless, I cannot deny the grace that God has

shown me in preserving me a virgin without ever a thought of marriage."

Forthwith her brother said to her—

"I offer you the precious Body of Jesus Christ, which you will take to your damnation if it be not as you say; and the gentlemen here present on behalf of my lord the Count shall be witnesses thereof."

The maiden, who was nearly thirty years of age,[3] then swore as follows:—

"I take this Body of Our Lord, here present, to my damnation in the presence of you, gentlemen, and of you, my brother, if ever man has touched me any more than yourself."

And with these words she received the Body of Our Lord.

Having witnessed this, the Master of Requests and the Almoner went away quite confounded, for they thought that no lie was possible with such an oath. And they reported the matter to the Count, and tried to persuade him even as they were themselves persuaded. But he was a man of wisdom,[4] and, after pondering a long time,

[3] In the MS. followed for this edition, as well as in Boaistuau's version of the *Heptameron*, the age is given as "thirteen." We borrow the word "thirty" from MS. 1518 (Béthune).—L.

[4] Charles of Angoulême, father of King Francis and Queen

bade them again repeat the terms of the oath. And after weighing them well, he said—

"She has told you the truth and yet she has deceived you. She said that no man had ever touched her any more than her brother had done, and I feel sure that her brother has begotten this child and now seeks to hide his wickedness by a monstrous deception. We, however, who believe that Jesus Christ has come, can look for none other. Go, therefore, and put the priest in prison; I am sure that he will confess the truth."

This was done according to his command, though not without serious remonstrances concerning the putting of this virtuous man to open shame.

Albeit, as soon as the priest had been taken, he made confession of his wickedness, and told how he had counselled his sister to speak as she had done in order to conceal the life they had led together, not only because the excuse

Margaret, had received for the times a most excellent education, thanks to the solicitude of his father, Count John the Good, who further took upon himself to "instruct him in morality, showing him by a good example how to live virtuously and honestly, and teaching him to pray God and obey His commandments."—*Vie de très illustre et vertueux Prince Jean, Comte d'Angoulesme*, by Jean du Port, Angoulême, 1589, p. 66. That Count Charles profited by this teaching is shown in the above tale.—ED.

was one easy to be made, but also because such a false statement would enable them to continue living honoured by all. And when they set before him his great wickedness in taking the Body of Our Lord for her to swear upon, he made answer that he had not been so daring, but had used a wafer that was unconsecrated and unblessed.

Report was made of the matter to the Count of Angoulême, who commanded that the law should take its course. They waited until the sister had been delivered, and then, after she had been brought to bed of a fine male child, they burned brother and sister together. And all the people marvelled exceedingly at finding beneath the cloak of holiness so horrible a monster, and beneath a pious and praiseworthy life indulgence in so hateful a crime.

"By this you see, ladies, how the faith of the good Count was not lessened by outward signs and miracles. He well knew that we have but one Saviour, who, when He said 'Consummatum est,'[5] showed that no room was left for any successor to work our salvation."

[5] "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished."—*St. John* xix. 30.—M.

"It was indeed," said Oisille, "great daring and extreme hypocrisy to throw the cloak of Godliness and true Christianity over so enormous a sin."

"I have heard," said Hircan, "that such as under pretext of a commission from the King do cruel and tyrannous deeds, receive a double punishment for having screened their own injustice behind the justice of the Crown. In the same way, we see that although hypocrites prosper for a time beneath the cloak of God and holiness, yet, when the Lord God lifts His cloak, they find themselves exposed and bare, and then their foul and abominable nakedness is deemed all the more hideous for having had so honourable a covering."

"Nothing can be pleasanter," said Nomerfide, "than to speak forth frankly the thoughts that are in the heart."

"Yes, for profit's sake,"[6] replied Longarine. "I have no doubt that you give your opinion according to your temper."

"I will tell you what it is," said Nomerfide. "I find that fools, when they are not put to death, live longer than wise folk, and the only reason that I know for this, is that they do not conceal their passions. If they be angry, they strike; if they be merry, they laugh; whereas those that aim at

[6] This sentence is rather obscure in the MSS., and we have adopted the reading suggested by M. Frank. M. Lacroix, however, was of opinion that the sentence should run, "Yes, for mirth's sake."—ED.

wisdom conceal their imperfections with such exceeding care that they end by thoroughly corrupting their hearts."

"I think you are right," said Geburon, "and that hypocrisy, whether towards God, man or Nature, is the cause of all our ills."

"It would be a glorious thing," said Parlamente, "if our hearts were so filled with faith in Him, who is all virtue and all joy, that we could freely show them to every one."

"That will come to pass," said Hircan, "when all the flesh has left our bones."

"Yet," said Oisille, "the Spirit of God, which is stronger than Death, is able to mortify our hearts without changing or destroying the body."

"Madam," returned Saffredent, "you speak of a gift of God that is not as yet common among mankind."

"It is common," said Oisille, "among those that have faith, but as this is a matter not to be understood by such as are fleshly minded, let us see to whom Simontault will give his vote."

"I will give it," said Simontault, "to Nomerfide, for, since her heart is merry, her words cannot be sad."

"Truly," said Nomerfide, "since you desire to laugh, I will give you reason to do so. That you may learn how hurtful are ignorance and fear, and how the lack of comprehension is often the cause

of much woe, I will tell you what happened to two Grey Friars, who, through failing to understand the words of a butcher, thought that they were about to die."

## *TALE XXXIV.*

*Two Grey Friars, while listening to secrets that did not concern them, misunderstood the language of a butcher and endangered their lives.*[1]

BETWEEN Nyort and Fors there is a village called Grip,[2] which belongs to the Lord of Fors.

[1] This story is evidently founded upon fact; the incidents must have occurred prior to 1530.—L.

[2] Gript, a little village on the Courance, eight miles south of Niort (Deux-Sèvres), produces some of the best white wine in this part of France. Its church of St. Aubin stood partly in the diocese of Poitiers, partly in that of Saintes, the altar being in the former, and the door in the latter one. This is the only known instance of the kind in France. Fors, a few miles distant from Gript, was a fief which Catherine, daughter of Artus de Vivonne, brought in marriage to James Poussart, knight, who witnessed the Queen of Navarre's marriage contract, signing himself, "Seigneur de Fors, Bailly du Berry." He is often mentioned in the Queen's letters. —See Génin's *Lettres de Marguerite*, &c., pp. 243–244, 258–259, 332.—L. and M.

It happened one day that two Grey Friars, on their way from Nyort, arrived very late at this place, Grip, and lodged in the house of a butcher. Now, as there was nothing between their host's room and their own but a badly joined partition of wood, they had a mind to listen to what the husband might say to his wife when he was in bed with her, and accordingly they set their ears close to the head of their host's bed. He, having no thought of his lodgers, spoke privately with his wife concerning their household, and said to her—

"I must rise betimes in the morning, sweetheart, and see after our Grey Friars. One of them is very fat, and must be killed; we will salt him forthwith and make a good profit off him."

And although by "Grey Friars" he meant his pigs, the two poor brethren, on hearing this plot, felt sure that they themselves were spoken of,[3] and so waited with great fear and trembling for the dawn.

One of them was very fat and the other rather lean. The fat one wished to confess himself to

[3] The butcher doubtless called his pigs "Grey Friars" in allusion to the latter's gluttony and uncleanly habits. Pigs are even nowadays termed *moines* (monks) by the peasantry in some parts of France. Moreover, the French often render our expression "fat as a pig" by "fat as a monk."—Ed.

his companion, saying that a butcher who had lost the love and fear of God would think no more of slaughtering him than if he were an ox or any other beast; and adding that as they were shut up in their room and could not leave it without passing through that of their host, they must needs look upon themselves as dead men, and commend their souls to God. But the younger Friar, who was not so overcome with fear as his comrade, made answer that, as the door was closed against them, they must e'en try to get through the window, for, whatever befel them, they could meet with nothing worse than death; to which the fat Friar agreed.

The young one then opened the window, and, finding that it was not very high above the ground, leaped lightly down and fled as fast and as far as he could, without waiting for his companion. The latter attempted the same hazardous jump, but in place of leaping, fell so heavily by reason of his weight, that one of his legs was sorely hurt, and he could not rise from the ground.

Finding himself forsaken by his companion and being unable to follow him, he looked around him to see where he might hide, and could espy nothing save a pigsty, to which he dragged himself as well as he could. And as he opened

the door to hide himself within, out rushed two huge pigs, whose place the unhappy Friar took, closing the little door upon himself, and hoping that, when he heard the sound of passers-by, he would be able to call out and obtain assistance.

As soon as the morning was come, however, the butcher got ready his big knives, and bade his wife bear him company whilst he went to slaughter his fat pig. And when he reached the sty in which the Grey Friar lay concealed, he opened the little door and began to call at the top of his voice—

"Come out, Master Grey Friar, come out! I intend to have some of your chitterlings to-day."

The poor Friar, who was not able to stand upon his leg, crawled on all-fours out of the sty, crying for mercy as loud as he could. But if the hapless Friar was in great terror, the butcher and his wife were in no less; for they thought that St. Francis was wrathful with them for calling a beast a Grey Friar, and therefore threw themselves upon their knees asking pardon of St. Francis and his Order. Thus, the Friar was crying to the butcher for mercy on the one hand, and the butcher to the Friar on the other, in such sort that a quarter of an hour went by before they felt safe from each other.

Perceiving at last that the butcher intended

him no hurt, the good father told him the reason why he had hidden himself in the sty. Then was their fear turned to laughter, except, indeed, that the poor Friar's leg was too painful to suffer him to be merry. However, the butcher brought him into the house, where he caused the hurt to be carefully dressed.

His comrade, who had deserted him in his need, ran all night long, and in the morning came to the house of the Lord of Fors, where he lodged a complaint against the butcher, whom he suspected of killing his companion, seeing that the latter had not followed him. The Lord of Fors forthwith sent to Grip to learn the truth, and this, when known, was by no means the cause of tears. And he failed not to tell the story to his mistress the Duchess of Angoulême, mother of King Francis, first of that name.[4]

"You see, ladies, how bad a thing it is to listen to secrets that do not concern us, and to misunderstand what other people say."

"Did I not know," said Simontault, "that Nomerfide would give us no cause to weep, but rather to laugh? And I think that we have all done so very heartily."

[4] Many modern stories and anecdotes have been based on this amusing tale.—ED.

"How comes it," said Oisille, "that we are more ready to be amused by a piece of folly than by something wisely done?"

"Because," said Hircan, "the folly is more agreeable to us, for it is more akin to our own nature, which of itself is never wise. And like is fond of like, the fool of folly, and the wise man of discretion. But I am sure," he continued, "that no one, whether foolish or wise, could help laughing at this story."

"There are some," said Geburon, "whose hearts are so bestowed on the love of wisdom that, whatever they may hear, they cannot be made to laugh. They have a gladness of heart and a moderate content such as nought can move."

"Who are they?" asked Hircan.

"The philosophers of olden days," said Geburon. "They were scarcely sensible of either sadness or joy, or at least they gave no token of either, so great a virtue did they deem the conquest of themselves and their passions. I too think, as they did, that it is well to subdue a wicked passion, but a victory over a natural passion, and one that tends to no evil, appears useless in my eyes."

"And yet," added Geburon, "the ancients held it for a great virtue."

"It is not maintained," said Saffredent, "that they all were wise. They had more of the appearance of sense and virtue than of the reality."

"Nevertheless, you will find that they rebuke everything bad," said Geburon. "Diogenes himself, even,

trod on the bed of Plato, who was too fond[5] of rare and precious things for his taste, and this in order to show that he despised Plato's vanity and greed, and would put them under foot. 'I trample with contempt,' said he, 'upon the pride of Plato.'"

"But you have not told all," said Saffredent, "for Plato retorted that he did so from pride of another kind."

"In truth," said Parlamente, "it is impossible to accomplish the conquest of ourselves without extraordinary pride. And this is the vice that we should fear most of all, for it springs from the death and destruction of all the virtues."

"Did I not read to you this morning," said Oisille, "that those who thought themselves wiser than other men, since by the sole light of reason they had come to recognise a God, creator of all things, were made more ignorant and irrational not only than other men, but than the very brutes, and this because they did not ascribe the glory to Him to whom it was due, but thought that they had gained the knowledge they possessed by their own endeavours? For having erred in their minds by ascribing to themselves that which pertains to God alone, they manifested their errors by disorder of body, forgetting and perverting their natural sex, as St. Paul to-day doth tell us in the Epistle that he wrote to the Romans."[6]

[5] The French word here is *curieux*, which in Margaret's time implied one fond of rare and precious things.—B. J.

[6] *Romans* i. 26, 27.—ED.

"There is none among us," said Parlamente, "but will confess, on reading that Epistle, that outward sin is but the fruit of infelicity dwelling within, which, the more it is hidden by virtue and marvels, is the more difficult to pluck out."

"We men," said Hircan, "are nearer to salvation than you are, for we do not conceal our fruits, and so the root is readily known; whereas you, who dare not display the fruit, and who do so many seemingly fair deeds, are hardly aware of the root of pride that is growing beneath so brave a surface."

"I acknowledge," said Longarine, "that if the Word of God does not show us by faith the leprosy of unbelief that lurks in the heart, yet God is very merciful to us when He allows us to fall into some visible wrongdoing whereby the hidden plague may be made manifest. Happy are they whom faith has so humbled that they have no need to test their sinful nature by outward acts."

"But just look where we are now," said Simontault. "We started from a foolish tale, and we are now fallen into philosophy and theology. Let us leave these disputes to such as are more fitted for such speculation, and ask Nomerfide to whom she will give her vote."

"I give it," she said, "to Hircan, but I commend to him the honour of the ladies."

"You could not have commended it in a better place," said Hircan, "for the story that I have ready is just such a one as will please you. It will, nevertheless, teach you to acknowledge that the nature of

men and women is of itself prone to vice if it be not preserved by Him to whom the honour of every victory is due. And to abate the pride that you display when a story is told to your honour, I will tell you one of a different kind that is strictly true."

J. Freudenberger. Inv.

Le Roy Sculp.

## TALE XXXV.

*The affection of a lady of Pampeluna—who, thinking that there was no danger in spiritual love, had striven to insinuate herself into the good graces of a Grey Friar—was subdued by her husband's prudence in such wise that, without telling her that he knew aught of the matter, he brought her mortally to hate that which she had most dearly loved, and wholly to devote herself to him.*

IN the town of Pampeluna there lived a lady who was accounted beautiful and virtuous, as well as the chastest and most pious in the land. She loved her husband, and was so obedient to him that he had entire trust in her. This lady was constantly present at Divine service and at sermons, and she used to persuade her husband and children to be hearers with her. She had reached the age of thirty years, at

which women are wont to claim discretion rather than beauty, when on the first day of Lent she went to the church to receive the emblem of death.[1] Here she found that the sermon was beginning, the preacher being a Grey Friar, a man esteemed holy by all the people on account of his great austerity and goodness of life, which made him thin and pale, yet not to such a point as to prevent him from being one of the handsomest men imaginable.

The lady listened piously to his sermon, her eyes being fixed on this reverend person, and her ears and mind ready to hearken to what he said. And so it happened that the sweetness of his words passed through the lady's ears even to her heart, while the comeliness and grace of his countenance passed through her eyes and so smote her soul that she was as one entranced. When the sermon was over, she looked carefully to see where[2] the Friar would celebrate mass, and there she presented herself to take the ashes from his hand. The latter was as fair and white as any lady's, and this pious lady paid more

[1] To receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday.—M.

[2] That is, in which of the chapels. A friar would not officiate at the high altar.—Ed.

attention to it than to the ashes which it gave her.

Feeling persuaded that a spiritual love such as this, with any pleasure that she might derive from it, could not wound her conscience, she failed not to go and hear the sermon every day and to take her husband with her; and they both gave such great praise to the preacher, that they spoke of nought beside at table or elsewhere. At last this supposed spiritual fire became so carnal that the poor lady's heart in which it glowed began to consume her whole body; and just as she had been slow to feel the flame, so did she now swiftly kindle, and feel all the delights of passion, before she knew that she even was in love. Being thus surprised by her enemy, Love, she offered no further resistance to his commands. But the worst was that the physician who might have cured her ills was ignorant of her distemper; for which reason, banishing the dread she should have had of making known her foolishness to a man of wisdom, and her vice and wickedness to a man of virtue and honour, she proceeded to write to him of the love she bore him, doing this, to begin with, as modestly as she could. And she gave her letter to a little page, telling him what he had

to do, and saying that he was to be careful above all things that her husband should not see him going to the monastery of the Grey Friars.

The page, desiring to take the shortest way, passed through a street in which his master was sitting in a shop. Seeing him pass, the gentleman came out to observe whither he was going, and when the page perceived him, he was quite confused, and hid himself in a house. Noticing this, his master followed him, took him by the arm and asked him whither he was bound. Finding also that he had a terrified look and made but empty excuses, he threatened to beat him soundly if he did not confess the truth.

"Alas, sir," said the poor page, "if I tell you, my lady will kill me."

The gentleman, suspecting that his wife was making some bargain without his knowledge, promised the page that he should come by no hurt, and should be well rewarded, if he told the truth; whereas, if he lied, he should be thrown into prison for life. Thereupon the little page, eager to have the good and to avoid the evil, told him the whole story, and showed him the letter that his mistress had written to the preacher. At this her husband was the more astonished and grieved, as he had all his life long been persuaded of the faithfulness of

his wife, in whom he had never discovered a fault.

Nevertheless, being a prudent man, he concealed his anger, and so that he might fully learn his wife's intention, he sent a reply as though from the preacher, thanking her for her goodwill, and declaring that his was as great towards her. The page, having sworn to his master that he would conduct the matter with discretion,[3] brought the counterfeit letter to his mistress, who was so greatly rejoiced by it that her husband could see that her countenance was changed; for, instead of growing lean from the fasts of Lent, she now appeared fairer and fresher than before they began.

It was now mid-Lent, but no thought of the Passion or Holy Week prevented the lady from writing her frenzied fancies to the preacher according to her wont; and when he turned his eyes in her direction, or spoke of the love of God, she thought that all was done or said for love of her; and so far as her eyes could utter her thoughts, she did not spare them.

The husband never failed to return her similar answers, but after Easter he wrote to her in the preacher's name, begging her to let him know

[3] This is borrowed from MS. 1520. In our MS. the passage runs, "The page having shown his master how to conduct this affair," &c.—L.

how he could secretly see her. She, all impatient for the meeting, advised her husband to go and visit some estates of theirs in the country, and this he agreed to do, hiding himself, however, in the house of a friend. Then the lady failed not to write to the preacher that it was time he should come and see her, since her husband was in the country.

The gentleman, wishing thoroughly to try his wife's heart, then went to the preacher, and begged him for the love of God to lend him his robe. The preacher, who was a man of worth, replied that the rules of his Order forbade it, and that he would never lend his robe for a masquerade.[4] The gentleman assured him, however, that he would make no evil use of it, and that he wanted it for a matter necessary to his

[4] This may be compared with the episode of Tappe-coue or Tickletoby in Pantagruel:—"Villon, to dress an old clownish father grey-beard, who was to represent God the Father [at the performance of a mystery], begged of Friar Stephen Tickletoby, sacristan to the Franciscan Friars of the place, to lend him a cope and a stole. Tickletoby refused him, alleging that by their provincial statutes it was rigorously forbidden to give or lend anything to players. Villon replied that the statute reached no further than farces, drolls, antics, loose and dissolute games. . . . Tickletoby, however, peremptorily bid him provide himself elsewhere, if he would, and not to hope for anything out of his monastical wardrobe. . . . Villon gave an account of this to the players as of a most abominable action; adding that God would shortly revenge himself and make an example of Tickletoby."—Urquhart's *Works of Rabelais, Pantagruel*, (Book IV. xiii.)—M.

happiness and his salvation. Thereupon the Friar, who knew the other to be a worthy and pious man, lent it to him; and with this robe, which covered his face so that his eyes could not be seen, the gentleman put on a false beard and a false nose, each similar to the preacher's. He also made himself of the same height by means of cork.[5]

Thus garmented, he repaired in the evening to his wife's apartment, where she was very piously awaiting him. The poor fool did not tarry for him to come to her, but ran to embrace him like a woman bereft of reason. Keeping his face bent down lest he should be recognised, he then began making the sign of the cross, and pretended to flee from her, saying the while nothing but—

"Temptation! temptation!"

"Alas, father," said the lady, "you are indeed right, for there is no stronger temptation than that which proceeds from love. But for this you have promised me a remedy; and I pray you, now that we have time and opportunity, to take pity upon me."

So saying, she strove to embrace him, but he ran all round the room, making great signs of the cross, and still crying—

[5] In Boaistuau's edition the sentence runs, "and by putting some cork in his shoes made himself of the same height as the preacher."—L.

"Temptation! temptation!"

However, when he found that she was urging him too closely, he took a big stick that he had beneath his cloak and beat her so sorely as to end her temptation, and that without being recognised by her. Then he immediately went and returned the robe to the preacher, assuring him that it had brought him good fortune.

On the morrow, pretending to come from a distance, he returned home and found his wife in bed, when, as though he knew nothing of her sickness, he asked her the cause of it; and she replied that it was a catarrh, and that she could move neither hand nor foot. The husband, who was much inclined to laugh, made as though he were greatly grieved, and as if to cheer her told her that he had bidden the saintly preacher to supper that evening. But she quickly replied—

"God forbid, sweetheart, that you should ever invite such folk. They bring misfortune into every house they visit."

"Why, sweet," said the husband, "how is this? You have always greatly praised this man, and for my own part I believe that if there be a holy man on earth, it is he."

"They are good in church and when preaching," answered the lady, "but in our houses they are very antichrists. I pray you, sweet, let me

not see him, for with my present sickness it would be enough to kill me."

"Since you do not wish to see him," returned the husband, "you shall not do so, but I must have him here to supper."

"Do what you will," she replied, "but let me not see him, for I hate such folk as I do the devil."

After giving supper to the good father, the husband said to him—

"Father, I believe you to be so beloved of God, that He will refuse you no request. I therefore entreat you to take pity on my poor wife, who for a week past has been possessed by the evil spirit in such a way, that she tries to bite and scratch every one. She cares for neither cross nor holy water, but I verily believe that if you will lay your hand upon her the devil will come forth, and I therefore earnestly entreat you to do so."

"My son," said the good father, "all things are possible to a believer. Do you, then, firmly believe that God in His goodness never refuses those that in faith seek grace from Him?"

"I do, father," said the gentleman.

"Be also assured, my son," said the friar, "that He can do what He will, and that He is even as powerful as He is good. Let us go,

then, strong in faith to withstand this roaring lion, and to pluck from him his prey, whom God has purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son."

Accordingly, the gentleman led this worthy man to where his wife lay on a little bed. She, thinking that it was the Friar who had beaten her, was much astonished to see him there and exceedingly wrathful; however, her husband being present, she cast down her eyes, and remained dumb.

"As long as I am with her," said the husband to the holy man, "the devil scarcely torments her. But sprinkle some holy water upon her as soon as I am gone, and you will soon see how the evil spirit does his work."

The husband left them alone together, and waited at the door to see how they would behave. When the lady saw no one with her but the good father, she began to cry out like a woman bereft of reason, calling him rascal, villain, murderer, betrayer. At this, the good father, thinking that she was surely possessed by an evil spirit, tried to put his hands upon her head, in order to utter his prayers upon it; but she scratched and bit him in such a fashion, that he was obliged to speak at a greater distance, whence, throwing a great deal

of holy water upon her, he pronounced many excellent prayers.

When the husband saw that the Friar had done his duty, he came into the room and thanked him for his trouble. At his entrance his wife ceased her cursings and revilings, and meekly kissed the cross in the fear she had of him. But the holy man, having seen her in so great a frenzy, firmly believed that Our Lord had cast out the devil in answer to his prayer, and he went away, praising God for this wonderful miracle.

The husband, seeing that his wife was well punished for her foolish fancy, did not tell her of what he had done. He was content to have subdued her affection by his own prudence, and to have so dealt with her that she now hated mortally what she had formerly loved, and, loathing her folly, devoted herself to her husband and household more completely than she had ever done before.

"In this story, ladies, you see the good sense of a husband and the frailty of a woman of repute. I think that if you look carefully into this mirror you will no longer trust to your own strength, but will learn to have recourse to Him who holds your honour in His hand."

"I am well pleased," said Parlamente, "to find you become a preacher to the ladies, and I should be

even more so if you would make these fine sermons to all those with whom you speak."

"Whenever you are willing to listen to me," said Hircan, "I promise you that I will say as much."

"In other words," said Simontault, "when you are not present, he will speak in a different fashion."

"He will do as he pleases," said Parlamente, "but for my content I wish to believe that he always speaks in this way. At all events, the example he has brought forward will be profitable to those who believe that spiritual love is not dangerous. In my opinion it is more so than any other."

"Yet," said Oisille, "it seems to me that to love a worthy, virtuous and God-fearing man is in nowise a matter for scorn, and that one cannot but be the better for it."

"Madam," said Parlamente, "I pray you believe that no one can be more simple or more easily deceived than a woman who has never loved. For in itself love is a passion that seizes upon the heart before one is aware of it, and so pleasing a passion is it that, if it can make use of virtue as a cloak, it will scarcely be recognised before some mischief has come of it."

"What mischief," asked Oisille, "can come of loving a worthy man?"

"Madam," said Parlamente, "there are a good many men that are esteemed worthy, but to be worthy in respect of the ladies, and to be careful for their honour and conscience—not one such man

as that could, I think, be found in these days. Those who think otherwise, and put their trust in men, find at last that they have been deceived, and, having begun such intimacy with obedience to God, will often end it with obedience to the devil. I have known many who, under pretext of speaking about God, began an intimacy from which they could not withdraw when at last they wished to do so, being held in subjection by this semblance of virtue. A vicious love perishes of its own nature, and cannot continue in a good heart, but virtuous love has bonds of silk so fine that one is caught in them before they are seen."

"According to you," said Ennasuite, "no woman should ever love a man; but your law is too harsh a one to last."

"I know that," said Parlamente, "but none the less must I desire that every one were as content with her own husband as I am with mine."

Ennasuite, who felt that these words touched her, changed colour and said—

"You ought to believe every one the same at heart as yourself, unless, indeed, you think yourself more perfect than all others."

"Well," said Parlamente, "to avoid dispute, let us see to whom Hircan will give his vote."

"I give it," Hircan replied, "to Ennasuite, in order to make amends to her for what my wife has said."

"Then, since it is my turn," said Ennasuite, "I

will spare neither man nor woman, that all may fare alike. I see right well that you are unable to subdue your hearts to acknowledge the virtue and goodness of men, for which reason I am obliged to resume the discourse with a story like to the last."

S. Gradenberg, Inv. L. Dalbon Sculp.

## *TALE XXXVI.*

*By means of a salad a President of Grenoble avenged himself upon one of his clerks with whom his wife was smitten, and so saved the honour of his house.*

IN the town of Grenoble there dwelt a President whose name I shall not mention, but he was not a Frenchman.[1] He had a very beautiful wife, and they lived in great tranquillity together.

This lady, finding that her husband was now old, fell in love with a young clerk, called Nicholas. When the President went to the

[1] The personage referred to is Jeffroy Charles or Carles, Chief President of the Parliament of Grenoble, and President of the Senate of Turin; his wife's name was Margaret du Mottet; she came of a very old family of Embrun. Some interesting particulars concerning President Charles, supplied by that erudite scholar M. Jules Roman, will be found in the Appendix to the present volume (A).—ED.

court in the morning, Nicholas used to enter his room and take his place. This was observed by a servant of the President's who had served his master well for thirty years, and in his faithfulness he could not refrain from speaking to him of the matter.

The President, being a prudent man, would not lightly believe the story, but said that the servant wished to create contention between himself and his wife. If the matter, said he, were really as the servant declared, he could easily prove it to him, and if proof were not given he would believe that it was a lie contrived in order to destroy the love existing between himself and his wife. The servant promised that he would show him the truth of what he had said, and one morning, as soon as the President was gone to the court and Nicholas had entered the room, he sent one of his fellow-servants to tell his master to come, while he himself remained watching at the door lest Nicholas should come out.

As soon as the President saw the sign that was made to him by one of his servants, he pretended to be ill, left the court and hastened home. Here he found his old servant at the door, and was assured by him that Nicholas was inside and had only just gone in.

"Do not stir from this door," said his lord to him, "for, as you are aware, there is no other means of going into or out of the room, except indeed by way of a little closet of which I myself alone carry the key."

The President entered the room and found his wife and Nicholas in bed together. The clerk, clad in nothing but his shirt, threw himself at his feet to entreat forgiveness, while his wife began to weep.

Then said the President—

"Though you have done a deed the enormity of which you may yourself judge, I am yet unwilling that my house should be dishonoured on your account, and the daughters I have had by you made to suffer. Wherefore," he continued, "cease to weep, I command you, and hearken to what I am going to do; and do you, Nicholas, hide yourself in my closet and make not a single sound."

When this was done, he opened the door, and calling his old servant, said to him—

"Did you not assure me that you would show me Nicholas in company with my wife? Trusting in your word, I came hither in danger of killing my poor wife, and I have found nothing of what you told me. I have searched the whole room, as I will show you."

So saying, he caused his servant to look under the beds and in every quarter. The servant, finding nothing, was greatly astonished, and said to his master—

"The devil must have made away with him, for I saw him go in, and he did not come out through the door. But I can see that he is not here."

Then said his master to him—

"You are a wicked servant to try to create contention in this way between my wife and me. I dismiss you, and will pay you what I owe you for your services to me, and more besides; but be speedily gone, and take care that you are not in the town twenty-four hours from now."

The President paid him for five or six years in advance, and, knowing him to be a faithful servant, resolved to reward him still further.

When the servant was gone weeping away, the President made Nicholas come forth from the closet, and after telling them both what he thought of their wickedness, he commanded them to give no hint of the matter to anyone. He also charged his wife to dress more bravely than was her wont, and to attend all assemblies, dances and feasts; and he told Nicholas to make more merry than before, but, as soon as he whispered to him, "Begone," to see that he was out of the

town before three hours were over. Having arranged matters in this way, he returned to the court, none being any the wiser. And for a fortnight, contrary to his wont, he entertained his friends and neighbours, and after the banquet had the tabourers, so that the ladies might dance.

One day, seeing that his wife was not dancing, he commanded Nicholas to lead her out. The clerk, thinking that the past had been forgotten, did so gladly, but when the dance was over, the President, under pretence of charging him with some household matter, whispered to him, "Begone, and come back no more." And albeit Nicholas was grieved to leave his mistress, yet was he no less glad that his life was spared.

When the President had convinced all his kinsfolk and friends and the whole countryside of the deep love that he bore his wife, he went into his garden one fine day in the month of May to gather a salad, of such herbs that his wife did not live for twenty-four hours after eating of them; whereupon he made such a great show of mourning that none could have suspected him of causing her death; and in this way he avenged himself upon his enemy, and saved the honour of his house.[2]

[2] Whilst admitting the historical basis of this story, M. Le Roux de Lincy conceives it to be the same as No. xlvii. of the *Cent*

"I do not mean by this, ladies, to praise the President's conscience, but rather to bring out the frailty of a woman and the great patience and prudence of a man. And I beg you, ladies, be not angered by the truth, which sometimes speaks as loudly against ourselves as against the men; for vice and virtue are common alike to men and women."

"If all those," said Parlamente, "who have fallen in love with their servants were obliged to eat salads of that kind, I know some who would be less fond of their gardens than they are at present, and who would pluck up the herbs to get rid of such as restore the honour of a family by compassing the death of a wanton mother."

Hircan, who guessed why she had said this, angrily replied—"A virtuous woman should never judge another guilty of what she would not do herself."

"Knowledge is not judgment nor yet foolishness," returned Parlamente. "However, this poor woman

*Nouvelles Nouvelles*, printed half-a-century before the *Heptameron* was written. Beyond the circumstance, however, that in both cases a judge is shown privily avenging himself on his wife for her infidelity, there is no resemblance between the two tales. There is good reason for believing that Queen Margaret's narrative is based on absolute fact, and not on the story in the *Cent Nouvelles*. Both tales have often been imitated. See for instance Bonaventure Despérier's *Contes, Nouvelles, et joyeux Devis* (tale xcii., or, in some editions, xc.); *Les Heures de Récreation de Louis Guicciardini*, p. 28; G. Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi, overro cento Novelle, &c.* (dec. iii. nov. vi.); Malespini's *Ducento Novelle* (part ii. nov. xvi.); Verboquet's *Les Délices, &c.*, 1623, p. 23; and Shirley's *Love's Cruelty*. These tales also inspired some of the Spanish dramatists, notably Calderon.—Ed. and L.

paid the penalty that many others have deserved, and I think that the President, when desirous of vengeance, comported himself with wondrous prudence and wisdom."

"And with great malevolence, also," said Longarine. "'Twas a slow and cruel vengeance, and showed he had neither God nor conscience before his eyes."

"Why, what would you have had him do," said Hircan, "to revenge himself for the greatest wrong that a woman can deal to a man?"

"I would have had him kill her in his wrath," she replied. "The doctors say that since the first impulses of passion are not under a man's control, such a sin may be forgiven; so it might have obtained pardon."

"Yes," said Geburon, "but his daughters and descendants would have always borne the stain."

"He ought not to have killed her at all," said Longarine, "for, when his wrath was past, she might have lived with him in virtue, and nothing would ever have been said about the matter."

"Do you think," said Saffredent, "that he was appeased merely because he concealed his anger? For my part, I believe that he was as wrathful on the last day, when he made his salad, as he had been on the first, for there are persons whose first impulses have no rest until their passion has worked its will. I am well pleased you say that the theologians deem such sins easy to be pardoned, for I am of their opinion."

"It is well to look to one's words," said Longarine,

"in presence of persons so dangerous as you. What I said is to be understood of passion when it is so strong that it suddenly seizes upon all the senses, and reason can find no place."

"It is so," said Saffredent, "that I understood your words, and I thence conclude that, whatever a man may do, he can commit only venial sin if he be deeply in love. I am sure that, if Love hold him fast bound, Reason can never gain a hearing, whether from his heart or from his understanding. And if the truth be told, there is not one among us but has had knowledge of such passion; and not merely do I think that sin so committed is readily pardoned, but I even believe that God is not angered by it, seeing that such love is a ladder whereby we may climb to the perfect love of Himself. And none can attain to this save by the ladder of earthly love,[3] for, as St. John says, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'"[4]

"There is not a passage in Scripture," said Oisille, "too good for you to turn to your own purposes. But beware of doing like the spider, which transforms sound meat into poison. Be advised that it is a perilous matter to quote Scripture out of place and without cause."

[3] All this passage is borrowed, almost word for word, from Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano*. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 10. —B. J.

[4] 1 *John* iv. 20.—M.

"Do you call speaking the truth out of place and without cause?" said Saffredent. "You hold, then, that when, in speaking to you unbelieving women, we call God to our assistance, we take His name in vain; but if there be any sin in this, you alone must bear the blame, for it is your unbelief that compels us to seek out all the oaths that we can think of. And in spite of it all, we cannot kindle the flame of charity in your icy hearts."

"That," said Longarine, "proves that you all speak falsely. If truth were in your words, it is strong enough to make you be believed. Yet there is danger lest the daughters of Eve should hearken too readily to the serpent."

"I see clearly," said Saffredent, "that women are not to be conquered by men. So I shall be silent, and see to whom Ennasuite will give her vote."

"I give it," she said, "to Dagoucin, for I think he would not willingly speak against the ladies."

"Would to God," said Dagoucin, "that they were as well disposed towards me as I am towards them. To show you that I have striven to honour the virtuous among them by recalling their good deeds, I will now tell you the story of such a one. I will not deny, ladies, that the patience of the gentleman at Pampeluna, and of the President at Grenoble was great, but then it was equalled in magnitude by their vengeance. Moreover, when we seek to praise a virtuous man, we ought not so to exalt a single virtue as to make of it a cloak for the concealment

of grievous vice ; for none are praiseworthy save such as do virtuous things from the love of virtue alone, and this I hope to prove by telling you of the patient virtue of a lady whose goodness had no other object save the honour of God and the salvation of her husband."

S. Freudenberg inv. L. Halbou Sculp.

## TALE XXXVII.

*The Lady of Loué so influenced her husband by her great patience and longsuffering, that she drew him from his evil ways, and they lived afterwards in greater love than before.*

THERE was a lady of the house of Loué[1] who was so prudent and virtuous, that she was

[1] Loué is in Anjou, in the department of the Sarthe, being the chief locality of a canton of the arrondissement of Le Mans. The Lady of Loué referred to may be either Philippa de Beaumont-Bressuire, wife of Peter de Laval, knight, Lord of Loué, Benars, &c.; or her daughter-in-law, Frances de Maillé, who in or about 1500 espoused Giles de Laval, Lord of Loué. Philippa is known to have died in 1525, after bearing her husband five children. She had been wedded fifty years. However, the subject of this story is the same as that of the Lady of Langallier, or Languillier (also in Anjou), which will be found in chapter xvii. of *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour-Landry*, an English translation of which, made in the reign of Henry VI., was edited in 1868 by Mr. Thomas Wright for the Early English Text Society.—See also Le Roux de Lincy's *Femmes célèbres de l'ancienne France*,

loved and esteemed by all her neighbours. Her husband trusted her, as well he might, with all his affairs, and she managed them with such wisdom that his house came, by her means, to be one of the wealthiest and best appointed in either the land of Anjou or Touraine.

In this fashion she lived a great while with her husband, to whom she bore several handsome children; but then, as happiness is always followed by its opposite, hers began to be lessened. Her husband, finding virtuous ease to be unendurable, laid it aside to seek for toil, and made it his wont to rise from beside his wife as soon as she was asleep, and not to return until it was nearly morning. The lady of Loué took this conduct ill, and falling into a deep unrest, of which she was fain to give no sign, neglected her household matters, her person and her family, like one that deemed herself to have lost the fruit of her toils, to wit, her husband's exceeding love, for the preserving of which there was no pain that she would not willingly have endured. But having lost it, as she could see, she became

vol i. p. 356. Particulars concerning the Laval-Loué family will be found in Duchesne's *Histoire de la Maison de Montmorency*. —L. and M.

careless of everything else in the house, and the lack of her care soon brought mischief to pass.

Her husband, on the one part, spent with much extravagance, while, on the other, she had ceased to control the management, so that ere long affairs fell into such great disorder, that the timber began to be felled, and the lands to be mortgaged.

One of her kinsfolk that had knowledge of her distemper, rebuked her for her error, saying that if love for her husband did not lead her to care for the advantage of his house, she should at least have regard to her poor children. Hereat her pity for them caused her to recover herself, and she tried all means to win back her husband's love.

In this wise she kept good watch one night, and, when he rose from beside her, she also rose in her nightgown, let make her bed, and said her prayers until her husband returned. And when he came in, she went to him and kissed him, and brought him a basin full of water that he might wash his hands. He was surprised at this unwonted behaviour, and told her that there was no need for her to rise, since he was only coming from the latrines; whereat she replied that, although it was no great

matter, it was nevertheless a seemly thing to wash one's hands on coming from so dirty and foul a place, intending by these words to make him perceive and abhor the wickedness of his life. But for all that he did not mend his ways, and for a full year the lady continued to act in this way to no purpose.

Accordingly, seeing that this behaviour served her naught, one day, while she was waiting for her husband, who tarried longer than ordinary, she had a mind to go in search of him, and, passing from room to room, found him at last in a closet at the back of the house, lying asleep by the side of the ugliest, vilest, and filthiest serving-woman they had.

Thereupon, thinking she would teach him to leave so excellent a wife for so filthy and vile a woman, she took some straw and set it on fire in the middle of the room; but on seeing that it would as soon kill her husband as awaken him, she plucked him by the arm, crying out—

"Fire! fire!"

If the husband was ashamed and sorry at being found by so virtuous a wife in company with such a slut, he certainly had good reason for it. Then said his wife to him—

"For a year, sir, have I tried by gentle and patient means to draw you from this wickedness, and to show you that whilst washing the outside you should also cleanse that which is within. Finding that all I could do was of no avail, I have sought assistance from that element which brings all things to an end, and I promise you, sir, that, if this do not mend you, I know not whether I shall a second time be able to deliver you from the danger as I have now done. I pray you remember that the deepest despair is that caused by love, and that if I had not had the fear of God before my eyes I could not have endured so much."

The husband, glad to get off so easily, promised that he would never again cause her any pain on his account. This the lady was very willing to believe, and with her husband's consent turned away the servant who had so offended her. And from that time forth they lived most lovingly together, so that even the errors of the past, by the good that had resulted from them, served but to increase their happiness.

"Should God give you such husbands, ladies, I pray you despair not until you have fully tried all means to win them back. There are twenty-four

hours in the day in which a man may change his mind, and a wife who has gained her husband over by patience and longsuffering should deem herself more fortunate than if fate and her kinsfolk had given her one more perfect."

"It is an example," said Oisille, "that all married women ought to follow."

"Follow it who will," said Parlamente; "for my own part, I should find it impossible to be patient so long. Although in every condition patience is a seemly virtue, yet I think that in wedded life it finally produces ill-will. For, when suffering is caused you by your partner, you are compelled to keep yourself as much apart from him as possible; and from such estrangement there springs up contempt for the faithless one; and this contempt gradually lessens love, for a thing is loved in proportion as it is esteemed."

"But there is a danger," said Ennasuite, "that the impatient wife may meet with a passionate husband who, instead of patience, will bring her pain."

"And what more," said Parlamente, "could a husband do than was done by the husband in the story?"

"What more?" said Ennasuite. "Why, beat his wife soundly, and make her lie in the smaller bed, and his sweetheart in the larger."[2]

"It is my belief," said Parlamente, "that a true

[2] At this period, and for some time afterwards, there were usually two beds in the master's room, a large one for himself and his wife,

woman would be less grieved by being beaten in anger than by being contemned for one of less worth than herself. After enduring the severance of love, nothing that her husband could do would be able to cause her any further pain. And in this wise the story says that the trouble she took to regain him was for the sake of her children—which I can well believe."

"And do you think that it showed great patience on her part," said Nomerfide, "to kindle a fire beneath the bed on which her husband was sleeping."

"Yes," said Longarine; "for when she saw the smoke she waked him, and herein, perhaps, was she most to blame; for the ashes of such a husband as hers would to my thinking have been good for the making of lye."

"You are cruel, Longarine," said Oisille, "but those are not the terms on which you lived with your own husband."

"No," said Longarine, "for, God be thanked, he never gave me cause. I have reason to regret him all my life long, not to complain of him."

"But if he had behaved in such a manner towards you," said Nomerfide, "what would you have done?"

"I loved him so dearly," said Longarine, "that I believe I should have killed him, and myself

and a small one in which slept a trusty servant, male or female. These little beds are shown in some of the designs engraved by Abraham Bosse in the seventeenth century.—L.

as well. To die after taking such a vengeance would have been sweeter to me than to live faithfully with the faithless."

"So far as I can see," said Hircan, "you do not love your husbands except for your own sakes. If they are what you want them to be, you are very fond of them; but if they fall into the slightest error towards you, they lose on a Saturday the toil of an entire week. Thus you are minded to rule, and I for my part will consent to it provided, however, that all other husbands agree."

"It is reasonable," said Parlamente, "that man should rule us as our head, but not that he should forsake us or treat us ill."

"God has provided so wisely," said Oisille, "both for man and for woman, that I hold marriage, if it be not abused, to be the goodliest and securest condition imaginable, and I am sure that, whatever they may seem to do, all here present think the same. And if the man claims to be wiser than the woman, he will be the more severely blamed should the fault come from him. But enough of such talk. Let us now see to whom Dagoucin will give his vote."

"I give it," he said, "to Longarine."

"You do me a great pleasure," she replied, "for I have read a story that is worthy to follow yours. Since we are set upon praising the virtuous patience of ladies, I will show you one more worthy of praise than she of whom we have just been

speaking. And she is the more deserving of esteem in that she was a city dame, and therefore one of those whose breeding is less virtuous than that of others."

S. Freudenberg. inv. E bet, Thiebault. Sculp

## *TALE XXXVIII.*

*A townswoman of Tours returned so much good for all the evil treatment she had received from her husband, that the latter forsook the mistress whom he was quietly maintaining, and returned to his wife.*[1]

IN the city of Tours there dwelt a chaste and comely townswoman, who, by reason of her virtues, was not only loved but feared also and

[1] It is probable that the incidents related in this tale occurred between 1460 and 1470. They will be found recorded in the *Ménagier de Paris.* (See Baron Pichon's edition, 1847, vol. i. p. 237). A similar narrative figures in some editions of Morlini's tales, notably the *Novellæ, Fabellæ, et Comediæ, Neapoli*, 1520. We further find it in Gueudeville's translation of Erasmus's Colloquies (*Dialogue sur le mariage, colloques, &c., Leyden*, 1720, vol. i. p. 87), and Mr. Walter Kelly has pointed out (the *Heptameron*, Bohn, 1864) that William Warner worked the same incidents into his poem *Albion's England*, his stanzas being reproduced in Percy's *Reliques* under the title of *The Patient Countess.*—L. and ED.

respected by her husband. Nevertheless, with all the fickleness of men who grow weary of ever eating good bread, he fell in love with a farm tenant[2] of his own, and would oft-time leave Tours to visit the farm, where he always remained two or three days; and when he came back to Tours he was always in so sorry a plight that his wife had much ado to cure him, yet, as soon as he was whole again, he never failed to return to the place where pleasure caused him to forget all his ills.

When his wife, who was anxious above all things for his life and health, found him constantly return home in so evil a plight, she went to the farm and found there the young woman whom her husband loved. Then, without anger but with graceful courage, she told her that she knew her husband often went to see her, but that she was ill-pleased to find him always return home exhausted in consequence of her sorry treatment of him. The poor woman, influenced as much by respect for her mistress as by regard

[2] The French word here is *métayère*. The *métayer* (fem. *métayère*) was a farm tenant under the general control of his landlord, who supplied him with seed and took to himself a considerable portion of the produce. The system was done away with at the Revolution, but was revived here and there under the Restoration, when some of the nobles came to "their own" again, and there may even nowadays be a few instances of the kind.—ED.

for the truth, was not able to deny the fact, and craved forgiveness.

The lady asked to see the room and bed in which her husband was wont to sleep, and found it so cold and dirty and ill-appointed that she was moved to pity. Forthwith she sent for a good bed furnished with sheets, blankets and counterpane such as her husband loved; she caused the room to be made clean and neat and hung with tapestries; provided suitable ware for his meat and drink, a pipe of good wine, sweetmeats and confections, and begged the woman to send him back no more in so miserable a state.

It was not long before the husband again went, as was his wont, to see his tenant, and he was greatly amazed to find his poor lodging in such excellent order. And still more was he surprised when the woman gave him to drink in a silver cup; and he asked her whence all these good things had come. The poor woman told him, weeping, that they were from his wife, who had taken such great pity on his sorry treatment that she had furnished the house in this way, and had charged her to be careful of his health.

When the gentleman saw the exceeding generosity of his wife in returning so much good for all the evil turns that he had done her, he looked

upon his own wrongdoing as no less great than her kindness; and, after giving some money to his tenant, he begged her to live in future as an honest woman. Then he went back to his wife, acknowledged his wrongdoing, and told her that, but for her great gentleness and generosity, he could never have forsaken the life that he had been leading. And thenceforward, forgetting the past, they lived in all peacefulness together.

"You may be sure, ladies, that there are but few husbands whom a wife's love and patience cannot win at last, unless they be harder even than stone, which weak and yielding water will in time make hollow."

"That woman," said Parlamente, "had neither heart, gall nor liver."

"What would you have had her do?" said Longarine. "She practised what God commands, and returned good for evil."[3]

"I think," said Hircan, "she must have been in love with some Grey Friar, who had laid upon her the penance of having her husband well treated in the country, so that, meantime, she might be free to entertain herself well in the town."

"Therein," said Oisille, "you clearly show the wickedness of your own heart, judging ill of a good deed. I rather believe her to have been so subdued

[3] "Recompense to no man evil for evil."—*Rom.* xii. 17. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing."—1 *Pet.* iii. 9.—Ed.

by the love of God that she cared for naught save the salvation of her husband's soul."

"It seems to me," said Simontault, "that he had more reason to return to his wife when he was so cold at the farm than afterwards when he was treated so well."

"From what I can see," said Saffredent, "you are not of the same opinion as the rich man of Paris who, when he lay with his wife, could not put off his gear without being chilled, but who never felt the worse when he went without cap or shoes, in the depth of winter, to see his servant-maid in the cellar. Yet his wife was very beautiful and the maid very ugly."

"Have you not heard," said Geburon, "that God always aids lunatics, lovers and sots? Perhaps he was all three in one."

"Do you thence conclude," said Parlamente, "that God recks not of the wise, the chaste and the temperate? Help is not needed by those who can help themselves. He who said that He had come for the sick and not for the whole,[4] came by the law of His mercy to succour our infirmities, thereby annulling the decrees of His rigorous justice; and he that deems himself wise is a fool in the sight of God. But, to end the sermon, to whom will Longarine give her vote?"

"I give it," she said, "to Saffredent."

"Then I hope," said Saffredent, "to prove to you

4 "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."—*St. Mark* ii. 17. See also *St. Luke* v. 31.—ED.

that God does not favour lovers. For although it has already been said, ladies, that vice is common to men and women alike, yet will a subtle artifice be more readily and adroitly devised by a woman than by a man. Of this I am now about to give you an instance."

S. Fraschenberg. inv. Ebet Thiebault. Sculp

## *TALE XXXIX.*

*The Lord of Grignaulx freed his house from a ghost which had so tormented his wife that for the space of two years she had dwelt elsewhere.*

A CERTAIN Lord of Grignaulx[1] who was gentleman of honour to the Queen of France, Anne, Duchess of Brittany, on returning to his house

[1] This is John de Talleyrand, knight, lord of Grignols and Fouquerolles, Prince of Chalais, Viscount of Fronsac, mayor and captain of Bordeaux, chamberlain of Charles VIII., first majordomo and gentleman of honour in turn to two French Queens, Anne of Brittany and Mary of England. His wife was Margaret de la Tour, daughter of Anne de la Tour, Viscount of Turenne, and Mary de Beaufort. She bore him several children. It was John de Talleyrand who warned Louise of Savoy that her son Francis, then Count of Angoulême, was paying court to the young Queen, Mary of England, wife to Louis XII. Apprehensive lest this intrigue should destroy her son's prospects, Louise prevailed on him to relinquish it (Brantôme's *Dames Illustres*).—L.

whence he had been absent during more than two years, found his wife at another estate, near by, and when he inquired the reason of this, she told him that a ghost was wont to haunt the house, and tormented them so much that none could dwell there.[2] Monsieur de Grignaulx, who had no belief in such absurdities, replied that were it the devil himself he was not afraid of him, and so brought his wife home again.

At night he caused many candles to be lighted that he might see the ghost more clearly, and, after watching for a long time without hearing anything, he fell asleep; but immediately afterwards he was awaked by a buffet upon the cheek, and heard a voice crying, "Brenigne, Brenigne," which had been the name of his grandmother.[3] Then he called to the serving-woman, who lay near them,[4] to light the candle, for all were now extinguished, but she durst not

[2] The house haunted by the ghost would probably be Talleyrand's château at Grignols, in the department of the Gironde. His lordship of Fouquerolles was only a few miles distant, in the Dordogne, and this would be the estate to which his wife had retired.—ED.

[3] Talleyrand's grandmother on the paternal side was Mary of Brabant; the reference may be to his maternal grandmother, whose Christian name was possibly "Benigne." On the other hand, Boaistuau gives the name as Revigne, and among the old French *noblesse* were the Revigné and Revigny families.—ED.

[4] See *ante*, note 2 to Tale XXXVII.

rise. And at the same time the Lord of Grignaulx felt the covering pulled from off him, and heard a great noise of tables, trestles and stools falling about the room; and this lasted until morning. However, the Lord of Grignaulx was more displeased at losing his rest than afraid of the ghost, for indeed he never believed it to be any such thing.

On the following night he resolved to capture this ghost, and so, when he had been in bed a little while, he pretended to snore very loudly, and placed his open hand close to his face. Whilst he was in this wise waiting for the ghost, he felt that something was coming near him, and accordingly snored yet louder than before, whereat the ghost was so encouraged as to deal him a mighty blow. Forthwith, the Lord of Grignaulx caught the ghost's hand as it rested on his face, and cried out to his wife—

"I have the ghost!"

His wife immediately rose up and lit the candle, and found that it was the serving-woman who slept in their room; and she, throwing herself upon her knees, entreated forgiveness and promised to confess the truth. This was, that she had long loved a serving-man of the house, and had taken this fine mystery in hand in order to drive both master and mistress away,

so that she and her lover, having sole charge of the house, might be able to make good cheer as they were wont to do when alone. My Lord of Grignaulx, who was a somewhat harsh man, commanded that they should be soundly beaten so as to prevent them from ever forgetting the ghost, and this having been done, they were driven away. In this fashion was the house freed from the plaguy ghosts who for two years long had played their pranks in it.[5]

"It is wonderful, ladies, to think of the effects wrought by the mighty god of Love. He causes women to put aside all fear, and teaches them to give every sort of trouble to man in order to work their own ends. But if the purpose of the serving-woman calls for blame, the sound sense of the master is no

[5] Talleyrand, who passes for having been the last of the "Rois des Ribauds" (see the Bibliophile Jacob's historical novel of that title), was, like his descendant the great diplomatist, a man of subtle and caustic humour. Brantôme, in his article on Anne of Brittany in *Les Dames Illustres*, repeatedly refers to him, and relates that on an occasion when the Queen wished to say a few words in Spanish to the Emperor's ambassador—there was a project of marrying her daughter Claude to Charles V.—she applied to Grignols to teach her a sentence or two of the Castilian language. He, however, taught her some dirty expression, but was careful to warn Louis XII., who laughed at it, telling his wife on no account to use the Spanish words she had learnt. On discovering the truth, Anne was so greatly vexed, that Grignols was obliged to withdraw from Court for some time, and only with difficulty obtained the Queen's forgiveness.—L. and Ed.

less worthy of praise. He knew that when the spirit departs, it returns no more."[6]

"In sooth," said Geburon, "love showed little favour to the man and the maid, but I agree that the sound sense of the master was of great advantage to him."

"Nevertheless," said Ennasuite, "the maid through her cunning lived for a long time at her ease."

"'Tis but a sorry ease," said Oisille, "that is founded upon sin and that ends in shame and chastisement."

"That is true, madam," said Ennasuite, "but many persons reap pain and sorrow by living righteously, and lacking wit enough to procure themselves in all their lives as much pleasure as these two."

"It is nevertheless my opinion," said Oisille, "that there can be no perfect pleasure unless the conscience be at rest."

"Nay," said Simontault, "the Italian maintains that the greater the sin the greater the pleasure."[7]

"In very truth," said Oisille, "he who invented such a saying must be the devil himself. Let us therefore say no more of him, but see to whom Saffredent will give his vote."

"To whom?" said he. "Only Parlamente now remains; but if there were a hundred others, she

[6] "A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again."—*Psalm* lxxviii. 39.—M.

[7] This may be a reference to Boccaccio or Castiglione, but the expression is of a proverbial character in many languages.—ED.

should still receive my vote, as being the one from whom we shall certainly learn something."

"Well, since I am to end the day," said Parlamente, "and since I promised yesterday to tell you why Rolandine's father built the castle in which he kept her so long a prisoner, I will now relate it to you."

S. Freudenberg inv....

## *TALE XL.*

*The sister of the Count of Jossebelin, after marrying unknown to her brother a gentleman whom he caused to be put to death (albeit except for his lowlier rank he had often desired him for his brother-in-law) did, with great patience and austerity of life, spend the remainder of her days in a hermitage.*[1]

THIS lord, who was the father of Rolandine and was called the Count of Jossebelin, had several sisters, some of whom were married to wealthy husbands, others becoming nuns, whilst one, who was beyond comparison fairer than all the rest, dwelt unwedded in his house.[2]

[1] The events here narrated would have occurred in or about 1479.—L.

[2] The so-called Count of Jossebelin is John II., Viscount de Rohan, previously referred to in Tale XXI. He was the son of Alan IX., Vicount of Rohan, by his second wife, Mary of Lorraine. Alan, by a first marriage with Margaret of Brittany,

And so dearly did she love her brother that he, for his part, preferred her even to his wife and children.

She was asked in marriage by many of good estate, but her brother would never listen to them through dread of losing her, and also because he loved his money too well. She therefore spent a great part of her life unwedded, living very virtuously in her brother's house. Now there was a young and handsome gentleman who had been reared from childhood in this same house, and who, growing in comeliness and virtue as well as in years, had come to have a complete and peaceful rule over his master, in such sort that whenever the latter desired to give any charge to his sister he always did so by means of this young gentleman,[3] and he allowed him so much influence and intimacy, sending him morning and

had three daughters, Jane, Margaret and Catherine, all three of whom were married advantageously. Contrary to Queen Margaret's assertion above, none of them became nuns; Alan may, however, have had illegitimate daughters who took the veil. By his second wife he had a son, John II., and a daughter christened Catherine, like her half-sister. She died unmarried, says Anselme's *Histoire Généalogique* (vol. iv. p. 57), and would appear to be the heroine of Queen Margaret's tale.—L. and B. J.

[3] This is possibly a Count of Keradreux, whom John II. is known to have put to death, though the Breton and French chroniclers do not relate the circumstances of the crime.—See *post*, p. 100, note 4.—ED.

evening to his sister, that at last a great love sprang up between the two.

But as the gentleman feared for his life if he should offend his master, and the lady feared also for her honour, their love found gladness in speech alone, until the Lord of Jossebelin had often said to his sister that he wished the gentleman were rich and of as good a house as her own, for he had never known a man whom he would so gladly have had for his brother-in-law.

He repeated these sayings so often that, after debating them together, the lovers concluded that if they wedded one another they would readily be forgiven. Love, which easily believes what it desires, persuaded them that nothing but good could come of it; and in this hope they celebrated and consummated the marriage without the knowledge of any save a priest and certain women.

After they had lived for a few years in the delight that man and woman can have together in marriage, and as one of the handsomest and most loving couples in Christendom, Fate, vexed to find two persons so much at their ease, would no longer suffer them to continue in it, but stirred up against them an enemy, who, keeping watch upon the lady, came to a know-

ledge of her great happiness, and, ignorant the while of her marriage, went and told the Lord of Jossebelin that the gentleman in whom he had so much trust, went too often to his sister's room, and that moreover at hours when no man should enter it. This the Count would not at first believe for the trust that he had in his sister and in the gentleman.

But the other, like one careful for the honour of the house, repeated the charge so often that a strict watch was set, and the poor folk, who suspected nothing, were surprised. For one evening the Lord of Jossebelin was advised that the gentleman was with his sister, and, hastening thither, found the poor love-blinded pair lying in bed together. His anger at the sight robbed him of speech, and, drawing his sword, he ran after the gentleman to kill him. But the other, being nimble of body, fled in nothing but his shirt, and, being unable to escape by the door, leaped through a window into the garden.

Then the poor lady, clad only in her chemise, threw herself upon her knees before her brother and said to him—

"Sir, spare the life of my husband, for I have indeed married him; and if you are offended punish only me, for what he did was done at my request."

Her brother, beside himself with wrath, could only reply—

"Even if he be your husband one hundred thousand times over, yet will I punish him as a rascally servant who has deceived me."

So saying, he went to the window and called out loudly to kill him, which was speedily done before the eyes of himself and his sister. The latter, on beholding the pitiful sight which no prayers on her part had been able to prevent, spoke to her brother like a woman bereft of reason.

"Brother," she said, "I have neither father nor mother, and I am old enough to marry according to my own pleasure. I chose one whom many a time you said you would gladly have me marry, and for doing by your own counsels that which the law permits me to do without them, you have put to death the man whom you loved best of all the world. Well, since my prayers have been of no avail to preserve his life, I implore you, by all the love you have ever borne me, to make me now a sharer in his death even as I have been a sharer in all his living fortunes. In this way, while sating your unjust and cruel anger, you will give repose to the body and soul of one who cannot and will not live without him."

Although her brother was almost distracted

with passion,[4] he had pity upon his sister, and so, without granting or denying her request, withdrew. After weighing well what he had done, and hearing that the gentleman had in fact married his sister, he would gladly have undone his grievous crime. Nevertheless, being afraid that his sister would seek justice or vengeance for it, he caused a castle to be built in the midst of a forest,[5] and, placing her therein,

[4] John II. of Rohan was a man of the most passionate, resentful disposition, and the greater part of his life was spent in furthering ambitious schemes, stirring up feuds and factions, and desolating Brittany with civil war. In 1470 we find him leaving the service of the Duke, his master, to enter that of Louis XI., on whose side he fought till the peace of Senlis in 1475. Four years later the Duke of Brittany caused him to be arrested on the charge of murdering the Count of Keradreux, and he appears to have remained in prison till 1484, when it is recorded that he fled to France, and thence to Lorraine. In 1487 he leagued himself with several discontented nobles to drive away the Chancellor of Brittany and various foreign favourites around the Duke, and carried civil war into several parts of the duchy. Then for a brief space he made his peace with the Duke, but again took up arms for the French King, fought at St. Aubin du Cormier, captured Dinan and besieged and pillaged Guingamp. Charles VIII. appointed him Lieutenant-general of Lower Brittany in 1491, and he was first commissary of the King of France at the States of Brittany held at Vannes in 1491 and 1501. In 1507 he witnessed the marriage contract of the Princess Claude with Francis, Duke of Valois, afterwards Francis I. (Anselme's *Histoire Généalogique*, vol. iv. p. 57). When Anne became Duchess of Brittany, John II. vainly strove to compel her to marry his son, James, and this was one of the causes of their life-long enmity (*ante* vol. iii. Tale XXI.) John II. died in 1516.—L. and Ed.

[5] If this be the château of Josselin, as some previous commentators think, Queen Margaret is in error here, for records subsist

forbade that any should have speech with her.

Some time afterwards he sought, for the satisfaction of his conscience, to win her back again, and spoke to her of marriage; but she sent him word that he had given her too sorry a breakfast to make her willing to sup off the same dish, and that she looked to live in such sort that he should never murder a second husband of hers; for, she added, she could scarcely believe that he would forgive another man after having so cruelly used the one whom he had loved best of all the world.

And although weak and powerless for revenge, she placed her hopes in Him who is the true Judge, and who suffers no wickedness to go unpunished; and, relying upon His love alone, was minded to spend the rest of her life in her hermitage. And this she did, for she never stirred from that place so long as she lived,

which prove that Josselin, now classed among the historical monuments of France, was built not by John II., but by his father, Alan IX. It rises on a steep rock on the bank of the Oust, at nine miles from Ploërmel, and on the sculptured work, both inside and out, the letters A. V. (Alan, Viscount) are frequently repeated, with the arms of Rohan and Brittany quartered together, and bearing the proud device *A plus*. It seems to us evident that the incidents recorded in the early part of Queen Margaret's tale took place at Josselin, and that Catherine de Rohan was imprisoned in some other château expressly erected by her brother.—D. and ED.

but dwelt there with such patience and austerity that her tomb was visited by every one as that of a saint.

From the time that she died, her brother's house came to such a ruinous state, that of his six sons not one was left, but all died miserably;[6] and at last the inheritance, as you heard in the former story, passed into the possession of Rolandine, who succeeded to the prison that had been built for her aunt.

"I pray God, ladies, that this example may be profitable to you, and that none among you will seek to marry for her own pleasure without the consent of those to whom obedience is due; for marriage is a state of such long continuance that it should not be entered upon lightly and without the advice of friends and kin. And, indeed, however wisely one may act, there is always at least as much pain in it as there is pleasure."

"In good faith," said Oisille, "were there neither God nor law to teach maidens discretion, this ex-

[9] Queen Margaret is in error here. Instead of six sons, John II., according to the most reliable genealogical accounts of the Rohan family, had but two, James, Viscount of Rohan and Lord of Leon, who died childless in 1527, and Claud, Bishop of Cornouailles, who succeeded him as Viscount of Rohan (Anselme). These had two sisters, Anne, the Rolandine of Tale XXI., and Mary, who died in June 1542 (Dillaye).—Ed.

ample would suffice to give them more reverence for their kindred, and not to seek marriage according to their own pleasure."

"Still, madam," said Nomerfide, "whoso has but one good day in the year, is not unhappy her whole life long. She had the pleasure of seeing and speaking for a long time with him whom she loved better than herself, and she moreover enjoyed the delights of marriage with him without scruple of conscience. I consider such happiness so great, that in my opinion it surpassed the sorrow that she bore."

"You maintain, then," said Saffredent, "that a woman has more pleasure in lying with a husband, than pain in seeing him put to death before her eyes."

"That is not my meaning," said Nomerfide," for it would be contrary to my experience of women. But I hold that an unwonted pleasure such as that of marrying the man whom one loves best of all the world, must be greater than that of losing him by death, which is common to all."

"Yes," said Geburon, "if the death be a natural one, but that in the story was too cruel. And I think it very strange, considering he was neither her father nor her husband but only her brother, and she had reached an age when the law suffers maidens to marry according to their own pleasure, that this lord should have had the daring to commit so cruel a deed."

"I do not think it at all strange," said Hircan, "for he did not kill his sister whom he dearly loved, and who was not subject to his control, but dealt with the gentleman whom he had bred as his son and loved as his brother. He had bestowed honour and wealth upon him in his service, and in return for all this the other sought his sister in marriage, a thing which was in nowise fitting for him to do."

"Moreover," said Nomerfide, "it was no ordinary or wonted pleasure for a lady of such high lineage to marry a gentleman servant for love. If the death was extraordinary, the pleasure also was novel, and it was the greater seeing that it had against it the opinions of all wise folk, for it was the happiness of a loving heart with tranquillity of soul, since God was in no wise offended by it. And as for the death that you call cruel, it seems to me that, since death is unavoidable, the swifter it comes the better; for we know that it is a road by which all of us must travel. I deem those fortunate who do not long linger on the outksirts of death, but who take a speedy flight from all that can be termed happiness in this world to the happiness that is eternal."

"What do you mean by the outskirts of death?" said Simontault.

"Such as have deep tribulation of spirit," replied Nomerfide, "such, too, as have long been ill, and in

their extreme bodily or spiritual pain have come to think lightly of death and find its approach too slow, such, I say, as these have passed through the outskirts of death and will tell you of the hostels where they knew more lamentation than rest. The lady of the story could not help losing her husband through death, but her brother's wrath preserved her from seeing him a long time sick or distressed in mind. And turning the gladness that she had had with him to the service of Our Lord, she might well esteem herself happy."

"Do you make no account," said Longarine, "of the shame that she endured, or of her imprisonment?"

"I consider," said Nomerfide, "that a woman who lives perfectly, with a love that is in keeping with the commands of her God, has no knowledge of shame or dishonour except when they impair or lessen the perfection of her love; for the glory of truly loving knows no shame. As for her imprisonment, I imagine that, with her heart at large and devoted to God and her husband, she thought nothing of it, but deemed her solitude the greatest freedom. When one cannot see what one loves, the greatest happiness consists in thinking constantly upon it, and there is no prison so narrow that thought cannot roam in it at will."

"Nothing can be truer than what Nomerfide says," observed Simontault, "but the man who in his

passion brought this separation to pass must have deemed himself unhappy indeed, seeing that he offended God, Love and Honour."

"In good sooth," said Geburon, "I am amazed at the diversity of woman's love. I can see that those who have most love have most virtue; but those who have less love conceal it in their desire to appear virtuous."

"It is true," said Parlamente, "that a heart which is virtuous towards God and man loves more deeply than a vicious one, and fears not to have its inmost purpose known."

"I have always heard," said Simontault, "that men should not be blamed if they seek the love of women, for God has put into the heart of man desire and boldness for asking, and in that of woman fear and chastity for refusal. If, then, a man be punished for using the powers that have been given him, he suffers wrong."

"But it must be remembered," said Longarine, "that he had praised this gentleman for a long time to his sister. It seems to me that it would be madness or cruelty in the keeper of a fountain to praise its fair waters to one fainting with thirst, and then to kill him when he sought to taste them."

"The brother," thereupon said Parlamente, "did indeed so kindle the flame by gentle words of his own, that it was not meet he should beat it out with the sword."

"I am surprised," said Saffredent, "to find it taken ill that a simple gentleman should by dint of love alone, and without deceit, have come to marry a lady of high lineage, seeing that the wisdom of the philosophers accounts the least of men to be of more worth than the greatest and most virtuous of women."

"The reason is," said Dagoucin, "that in order to preserve the commonwealth in peace, account is only taken of the rank of families, the age of persons, and the provisions of the laws, without regard to the love and virtue of individuals, and all this so that the kingdom may not be disturbed. Hence it comes to pass that, in marriages made between equals and according to the judgment of kinsfolk and society, the husband and wife often journey to the very outskirts of hell."

"Indeed it has been seen," said Geburon, "that those who, being alike in heart, character and temperament, have married for love and paid no heed to diversity of birth and lineage, have ofttime sorely repented of it; for a deep unreasoning love is apt to turn to jealousy and rage."

"It seems to me," said Parlamente, "that neither course is worthy of praise, but that folks should submit themselves to the will of God, and pay no heed to glory, avarice or pleasure, and loving virtuously and with the approval of their kinsfolk, seek only to live in the married state as God and nature

ordain. And although no condition be free from tribulation, I have nevertheless seen such persons live together without regret; and we of this company are not so unfortunate as to have none of these married ones among the number."

Hircan, Geburon, Simontault and Saffredent swore that they had wedded after this sort, and had never repented since. Whatever the truth of this declaration may have been, the ladies concerned were exceedingly content with it, and thinking that they could hear nothing to please them better, they rose up to go and give thanks for it to God, and found the monks at the church, ready for vespers.

When the service was over they went to supper, but not without much discourse concerning their marriages; and this lasted all the evening, each one relating the fortune that had befallen him whilst he was wooing his wife.

As it happened, however, that one was interrupted by another, it is not possible to set down these stories in full, albeit they would have been as pleasant to write as those which had been told in the meadow. Such great delight did they take in the converse, and so well did it entertain them, that, before they were aware of it, the hour for rest had come.

The Lady Oisille made the company separate, and they betook themselves to bed so joyously that, what with recounting the loves of the past, and proving

those of the present, the married folk, methinks, slept no longer than the others.

And so the night was pleasantly spent until the morning.

# FIFTH DAY.

*On the Fifth Day Tales are told of the virtue of those maids and matrons who held their honour in more consideration than their pleasure, also of those who did the contrary, and of the simplicity of certain others.*

## *FIFTH DAY.*

### PROLOGUE.

When morning was come, the Lady Oisille made ready for them a spiritual breakfast of such excellent flavour that it sufficed to strengthen both body and mind. The whole company was very attentive to it; it seemed to them that they had never harkened to a sermon with such profit before. Then, when the last bell rang for mass, they went to meditate upon the pious discourse which they had heard.

After listening to mass, and walking for a little while, they went to table feeling assured that the present day would prove as agreeable as any of the past. Saffredent even said that he would gladly have the bridge building for another month, so great was the pleasure that he took in their entertainment; but the Abbot was pressing the work with all speed, for it was no pleasure to him to live in the company of so many honourable persons, among whom he could not bring his wonted female pilgrims.

Having rested for a time after dinner, they returned to their accustomed diversion. When all were seated

in the meadow, they asked Parlamente to whom she gave her vote.

"I think," she replied, "that Saffredent might well begin this day, for his face does not look as though he wished us to weep."

"Then, ladies, you will needs be very hard-hearted," said Saffredent, "if you take no pity on the Grey Friar whose story I am going to relate to you. You may perhaps think, from the tales that some among us have already told of the monks, that misadventures have befallen hapless damsels simply because ease of execution induced the attempt to be fearlessly begun, but, so that you may know that it is the blindness of wanton lust which deprives the friars of all fear and prudence, I will tell you of what happened to one of them in Flanders."

## *TALE XLI.*

*A Grey Friar to whom a maiden had presented herself on Christmas night that he might confess her, laid upon her so strange a penance that she would not submit to it, but rose from before him without having received absolution; but her mistress, hearing of the matter, caused the Grey Friar to be flogged in her kitchen, and then sent him back, bound and gagged, to his Warden.*

In the year when my Lady Margaret of Austria came to Cambray on behalf of her nephew the Emperor, to treat of peace between him and the Most Christian King, who on his part was represented by his mother, my Lady Louise of Savoy,[1] the said Lady Margaret had in her train

[1] It was in June 1529 that Margaret of Austria came to Cambrai to treat for peace, on behalf of Charles V. Louise of Savoy, who represented Francis I., was accompanied on this occasion by her daughter, Queen Margaret, who appears to have taken part in the conferences. The result of these was that the Emperor renounced

the Countess of Aiguemont,[2] who won, among this company, the renown of being the most beautiful of all the Flemish ladies.

When this great assembly separated, the Countess of Aiguemont returned to her own house, and, Advent being come, sent to a monastery of Grey Friars to ask for a clever preacher and virtuous man, as well to preach as to confess herself and her whole household. The Warden, remembering the great benefits that the Order received from the house of Aiguemont and that of Fiennes, to which the Countess belonged, sought out the man whom he thought most worthy to fill the said office.

Accordingly, as the Grey Friars more than any other order desire to obtain the esteem and friendship of great houses, they sent the most important preacher of their monastery, and throughout

his claims on Burgundy, but upheld all the other stipulations of the treaty of Madrid. Having been brought about entirely by feminine negotiators, the peace of Cambrai acquired the name of "La Paix des Dames," or "the Ladies' Peace." Some curious particulars of the ceremonies observed at Cambrai on this occasion will be found in Leglay's *Notice sur les fêtes et cérémonies à Cambray depuis le XI^e siècle*, Cambrai, 1827.—L. and B. J.

[2] This is Frances of Luxemburg, Baroness of Fiennes and Princess of Gavre, wife of John IV., Count of Egmont, chamberlain to the Emperor Charles V. They were the parents of the famous Lamoral Count of Egmont, Prince of Gavre and Baron of Fiennes, born in 1522 and put to death by the Duke of Alba on June 5, 1568.—B. J.

Advent he did his duty very well, and the Countess was well pleased with him.

On Christmas night, when the Countess desired to receive her Creator, she sent for her confessor, and after making confession in a carefully closed chapel, she gave place to her lady of honour, who in her turn, after being shriven, sent her daughter to pass through the hands of this worthy confessor. When the maiden had told all that was in her mind, the good father knew something of her secrets, and this gave him the desire and the boldness to lay an unwonted penance upon her.

"My daughter," said he, "your sins are so great that to atone for them I command you the penance of wearing my cord upon your naked flesh."

The maiden, who was unwilling to disobey him, made answer—

"Give it to me, father, and I will not fail to wear it."

"My daughter," said the good father, "it will be of no avail from your own hand. Mine, from which you shall receive absolution, must first bind it upon you; then shall you be absolved of all your sins."

The maiden replied, weeping, that she would not suffer it.

"What?" said the confessor. "Are you a heretic, that you refuse the penances which God and our holy mother Church have ordained?"

"I employ confession," said the maiden, "as the Church commands, and I am very willing to receive absolution and do penance. But I will not be touched by your hands, and I refuse this mode of penance."

"Then," said the confessor, "I cannot give you absolution."

The maiden rose from before him greatly troubled in conscience, for, being very young, she feared lest she had done wrong in thus refusing to obey the worthy father.

When mass was over and the Countess of Aiguemont had received the "Corpus Domini," her lady of honour, desiring to follow her, asked her daughter whether she was ready. The maiden, weeping, replied that she was not shriven.

"Then what were you doing so long with the preacher?" asked her mother.

"Nothing," said the maiden, "for, as I refused the penance that he laid upon me, he on his part refused me absolution."

Making prudent inquiry, the mother learnt the extraordinary penance that the good father had chosen for her daughter; and then, having caused her to be confessed by another, they received the

sacrament together. When the Countess was come back from the church, the lady of honour made complaint to her of the preacher, whereupon the Countess was the more surprised and grieved, since she had thought so well of him. Nevertheless, despite her anger, she could not but feel very much inclined to laugh at the unwonted nature of the penance.

Still her laughter did not prevent her from having the friar taken and beaten in her kitchen, where he was brought by the strokes of the rod to confess the truth; and then she sent him bound hand and foot to his Warden, begging the latter for the future to commission more virtuous men to preach the Word of God.

"Consider, ladies, if the monks be not afraid to display their wantonness in so illustrious a house, what may they not do in the poor places where they commonly make their collections, and where opportunities are so readily offered to them, that it is a miracle if they are quit of them without scandal. And this, ladies, leads me to beg of you to change your ill opinion into compassion, remembering that he [3] who blinds the Grey Friars is not sparing of the ladies when he finds an opportunity."

"Truly," said Oisille, "this was a very wicked

[3] The demon.—B. J.

Grey Friar. A monk, a priest and a preacher to work such wickedness, and that on Christmas day, in the church and under the cloak of the confessional —all these are circumstances which heighten the sin."

"It would seem from your words," said Hircan, "that the Grey Friars ought to be angels, or more discreet than other men, but you have heard instances enough to show you that they are far worse. As for the monk in the story, I think he might well be excused, seeing that he found himself shut up all alone at night with a handsome girl."

"True," said Oisille, "but it was Christmas night."

"That makes him still less to blame," said Simontault, "for, being in Joseph's place beside a fair virgin, he wished to try to beget an infant and so play the Mystery of the Nativity to the life."

"In sooth," said Parlamente, "if he had thought of Joseph and the Virgin Mary, he would have had no such evil purpose. At all events, he was a wickedly-minded man to make so evil an attempt upon such slight provocation."

"I think," said Oisille, "that the Countess punished him well enough to afford an excellent example to his fellows."

"But 'tis questionable," said Nomerfide, "whether she did well in thus putting her neighbour to shame, or whether 'twould not have been better to have quietly shown him his faults, rather than have made them so publicly known."

"That would, I think, have been better," said

Geburon, "for we are commanded to rebuke our neighbour in secret, before we speak of the matter to any one else or to the Church. When a man has been brought to public disgrace, he will hardly ever be able to mend his ways, but fear of shame withdraws as many persons from sin as conscience does."

"I think," said Parlamente, "that we ought to observe the teaching of the Gospel towards all except those that preach the Word of God and act contrary to it. We should not be afraid to shame such as are accustomed to put others to shame; indeed I think it a very meritorious thing to make them known for what they really are, so that we take not a mock stone[4] for a fine ruby. But to whom will Saffredent give his vote?"

"Since you ask me," he replied, "I will give it to yourself, to whom no man of understanding should refuse it."

"Then, since you give it to me, I will tell you a story to the truth of which I can myself testify. I have always heard that when virtue abides in a weak and feeble vessel, and is assailed by its strong and puissant opposite, it especially deserves praise, and shows itself to be what it really is. If strength withstand strength, it is no very wonderful thing; but if weakness win the victory, it is lauded by every one. Knowing, as I do, the persons of whom I desire to

[4] The French word here is *doublet*. The *doublet* was a piece of crystal, cut after the fashion of a diamond, and backed with red wax so as to give it somewhat the colour of a ruby.—B. J.

speak, I think that I should do a wrong to virtue, (which I have often seen hidden under so mean a covering that none gave it any heed), if I did not tell of her who performed the praiseworthy actions that I now feel constrained to relate."

## TALE XLII.

*A young Prince set his affections upon a young girl, and although she was of low and poor parentage, he could not, in spite of all his efforts, obtain from her what he had hoped to have. Accordingly, recognising her virtue and honour, the Prince desisted from his attempt, esteemed her highly all his life, and, marrying her to a follower of his own, bestowed great benefits upon her.*

IN one of the best towns in Touraine there dwelt a lord of illustrious family, who had there been brought up from early youth. Of the perfections, graces, beauty and great virtues of this young Prince[1] I will say nothing, except that in his

[1] This is undoubtedly Francis I., then Count of Angoulême. M. de Lincy thinks that the scene of the story must be Amboise, where Louise of Savoy went to live with her children in 1499, and remained for several years; Louis XII. having placed the château there at her disposal. Francis, however, left Amboise to join the Court at Blois in August 1508, when less than fourteen years old (see Memoir of

time his equal could not be found. Being fifteen years of age, he had more pleasure in hunting and hawking than in looking at beautiful ladies.

One day in a church he beheld a young maiden who formerly, during her childhood, had been bred in the castle where he dwelt; but after her mother's death, her father having married again, she had withdrawn into Poitou with her brother. This maiden, who was called Frances, had a bastard sister whom her father dearly loved, and whom he had married to the young Prince's butler, who maintained her in as excellent a condition as that of any of her family. It came to pass that the father died and left to Frances as her portion what he possessed near the town aforementioned, and thither she returned after his death; nevertheless, being unmarried and only sixteen years of age, she would not live alone in her house, but went to lodge with her sister, the butler's wife.

On perceiving this girl, who was passably

Queen Margaret, vol. i. p. xxiii.), and in the tale, above, he is said to have been fifteen at the time of the incidents narrated. These, then, would have occurred in the autumn of 1509. It will be seen that in the tale the young Prince's sister (Margaret) is described as residing at the castle. Now Margaret married Charles of Alençon at Blois, in October 1509, and forthwith removed to Alençon. Possibly Francis, who was very precocious, especially in matters of gallantry, engaged in the love affair narrated by his sister at a yet earlier age than she asserts, in which case the town she refers to would undoubtedly be Amboise.—ED.

beautiful for a light brunette, and possessed a grace beyond her condition (for, indeed, she seemed rather a lady or princess than a townswoman), the young Prince gazed at her for a long time, and he, who never yet had loved, now felt in his heart an unwonted delight. On returning to his apartment he inquired concerning the maiden he had seen in the church, and then recollected that formerly in her youth she had come to the castle to have dolls' play with his sister. He reminded the latter of her; and his sister sent for her, received her kindly, and begged her to come often to see her. This she did whenever there was a feast or entertainment; and the young Prince was so pleased to see her that he had in mind to be deeply in love with her, and, knowing her to be of low and poor parentage, hoped easily to obtain what he sought.

Having no means of speaking with her, he sent a gentleman of his chamber to her to conduct his intrigue. But she, being discreet and fearing God, told the gentleman that she did not believe so handsome and honourable a Prince as his master could have pleasure in looking upon one so ugly as herself, since he had so many beautiful ladies in the castle where he lived, that he had no need to search through the town; and she added that in her opinion

the gentleman was speaking of his own authority, and without his master's command.

When the young Prince received this reply, love, which becomes the more eager the more it meets with resistance, caused him to pursue his enterprise more hotly than before, and to write her a letter in which he begged that she would believe all the gentleman had told her.

Being well able to read and write, she read the letter through, but, in spite of all the gentleman's entreaties, she would never send an answer to it. It was not for one of such low degree, she said, to write to so noble a Prince, and she begged the gentleman not to deem her foolish enough to believe that the Prince had so much love for her. Moreover, he was deceived if he thought that he could have her at his will by reason of her humble condition; for her heart was as virtuous as that of the greatest Princess in Christendom, and she looked upon all the treasures in the world as naught in comparison with honour and a good conscience. She therefore entreated him not to try to hinder her from keeping these treasures safe her whole life long, for she would never change her mind even were she threatened with death.

The young Prince did not find this reply to his liking, nevertheless he loved her dearly for

it, and never failed to have his chair set in the church to which she went to hear mass, where, during the service, he would ever turn his eyes upon the same image. When she perceived this, she changed her place and went to another chapel—not indeed to flee the sight of him, for she would not have been a reasonable being had she not found pleasure in beholding him—but because she dreaded to be seen by him. She did not deem herself worthy to be loved by him in honour or marriage, and, on the other hand, she would not be loved wantonly and for pleasure. When she found that, in whatever part of the church she placed herself, the Prince heard mass close by, she would no longer go to the same church, but repaired every day to the remotest that she could find. And when there was feasting at the castle, although the Prince's sister often sent for her, she would no longer go thither, but excused herself on the plea of sickness.

Finding that he could not have speech with her, the Prince had recourse to his butler, and promised him great rewards if he would lend assistance in the matter. This the butler, for the sake both of pleasing his master and of the gain that he expected, readily promised to do. Every day he would relate to the Prince what

she said or did, telling him that she was especially careful to shun all opportunities of seeing him. However, the great desire that the Prince had of speaking with her at his ease, prompted him to devise the following plan.

One day he took his chargers, which he was beginning to manage excellently well, to a large open space in the town opposite to his butler's house, in which Frances lived. After making many courses and leaps which she could easily see, he let himself fall from his horse into some deep mire, but so softly that he was not hurt. Nevertheless he uttered passably loud groans, and asked whether there was a house near in which he might change his dress. Every one offered his own, but on some one saying that the butler's was the nearest and worthiest, it was chosen before all the others.

He found the room well furnished, and, as all his garments were soiled with the mud, he stripped himself to his shirt, and got into a bed. Then, when he saw that, except the gentleman aforementioned, every one was gone to bring him some clothes, he called his host and hostess and asked them where Frances was. They had much ado to find her, for, as soon as she had seen the young Prince coming in, she had gone to hide herself in the most retired nook in the

house. Nevertheless her sister found her, and begged her not to be afraid to speak to so worshipful and virtuous a Prince.

"What! sister," said Frances, "do you, whom I look upon as my mother, advise me to go and speak with a young lord, of whose purpose, as you are aware, I cannot be ignorant?"

However, her sister addressed so many remonstrances to her, and promised so often not to leave her alone, that she at last went with her, showing so pale and sorry a face that she seemed more likely to beget compassion than desire.

When the young Prince saw her by his bedside, he took hold of her hand, which was cold and trembling, and said to her—

"Frances, do you deem me so wicked a man, and so strange and cruel, that I eat the women I look upon? Why have you come to be so afraid of me who seek only your honour and profit? You know that I have sought to hold converse with you in all possible places, but all in vain; and, to grieve me still more, you have even shunned the places where I had been wont to see you at mass, so that my eyes might bring me as little gladness as my tongue. But all this has availed you naught, for I have never rested until I came hither in the manner you have seen, and I have risked my neck, in allowing myself to

fall, in order that I might have the joy of speaking to you without hindrance. I therefore entreat you, Frances, that the opportunity gained by so much toil may not be thrown away, and that my deep love may avail to win your own."

After waiting a long time for her reply, and seeing that her eyes were full of tears and fixed upon the ground, he drew her to him as closely as he could, and tried to embrace and kiss her. But she said to him—

"No, my lord, no; what you desire cannot be, for although I am but a worm of the earth compared with you, I hold my honour dear, and would rather die than lessen it for any pleasure that the world can give. And the dread I have lest those who have seen you come in should suspect the truth, makes me tremble and be afraid as you see. And, since it pleases you to do me the honour of speaking to me, you will also forgive me if I answer you according as my honour requires. I am not so foolish, my lord, nor so blind as not to perceive and recognise the comeliness and grace that God has given you, or not to consider that she who shall possess the person and love of such a Prince must be the happiest woman alive. But what does all this avail me, since it is not for me or any woman of my condition, and since even to long for it would, in me,

be utter folly? What reason can I believe to be yours in addressing yourself to me except that the ladies in your house, whom you must love if you have any love for beauty and grace, are so virtuous that you dare not seek or expect from them what the lowliness of my condition has led you to expect from me? I am sure that if you obtained your desire from one such as I, it would afford matter for entertainment to your mistress during two good hours, to hear you tell her of your conquests over the weak. But, my lord, be pleased to bear in mind that I shall never be of their number. I have been brought up in your house, where I have learned what it is to love; my father and my mother were your faithful servants. Since, therefore, God has not made me a Princess to marry you, nor of sufficient rank to be your mistress and love, you will be pleased not to try to number me with the unfortunate, seeing that I deem and would have you to be one of the happiest Princes in Christendom. If for diversion you would have women of my condition, you will find in this town many who are beyond compare more beautiful than I, and who will spare you the pains of so many entreaties. Content yourself, then, with those to whom you will give pleasure by the purchase of their honour, and cease to trouble one who loves

you more than she loves herself. For, indeed, if either your life or mine were required of God this day, I should esteem myself fortunate in offering mine to save yours. It is no lack of love that makes me shun your presence, but rather too great a love for your conscience and mine; for I hold my honour dearer than life. I will continue, my lord, if it please you, in your good grace, and will all my life pray God for your health and prosperity. And truly the honour that you have done me will lend me consideration among those of my own rank, for, after seeing you, where is the man of my own condition upon whom I could deign to look? So my heart will continue free save for the duty which shall always be mine of praying to God on your behalf. But no other service can you ever have of me."

On hearing this virtuous reply, contrary though it was to his desires, the young Prince could not but esteem her as she deserved. He did all that he could to persuade her that he would never love another woman, but she was too prudent to suffer so unreasonable a thought to enter her mind. While they were talking together, word was often brought that his clothes were come from the castle, but such was his present pleasure and comfort, that he caused answer to be given that

he was asleep. And this continued until the hour for supper was come, when he durst not fail to appear before his mother, who was one of the discreetest ladies imaginable.

Accordingly, the young man left his butler's house thinking more highly than ever of the maiden's virtue. He often spoke of her to the gentleman that slept in his room, and the latter, who deemed money to be more powerful than love, advised his master to offer her a considerable sum if she would yield to his wishes. The young Prince, whose mother was his treasurer, had but little money for his pocket, but, borrowing as much as he was able, he made up the sum of five hundred crowns, which he sent by the gentleman to the girl, begging her to change her mind.

But, when she saw the gift, she said to the gentleman—

"I pray you tell my lord that I have a good and virtuous heart, and that if it were meet to obey his commands his comeliness and grace would ere now have vanquished me; but, since these have no power against my honour, all the money in the world can have none. Take it, therefore, back to him again, for I would rather enjoy virtuous poverty than all the wealth it were possible to desire."

On beholding so much stubbornness, the gentleman thought that violence must needs be used to win her, and threatened her with his master's authority and power. But she laughed, and said—

"Make those fear him who have no knowledge of him. For my part, I know him to be so discreet and virtuous that such discourse cannot come from him, and I feel sure that he will disown it when you repeat it to him. But even though he were what you say, there is neither torment nor death that would make me change my mind; for, as I have told you, since love has not turned my heart, no imaginable evil or good can divert me one step from the path that I have chosen."

The gentleman, who had promised his master to win her, brought him back this reply in wondrous anger, and counselled him to persevere in every possible way, telling him that it was not to his honour to be unable to win a woman of her sort.

The young Prince was unwilling to employ any means but such as honour enjoins, and was also afraid that if the affair made any noise, and so came to his mother's ears, she would be greatly angered with him. He therefore durst make no attempt, until at last the gentleman proposed to him so simple a plan that he could already fancy

her to be in his power. In order to carry it into execution he spoke to the butler; and he, being anxious to serve his master in any way that might be, begged his wife and sister-in-law one day to go and visit their vintages at a house he had near the forest. And this they promised to do.

When the day was come, he informed the Prince, who resolved to go thither alone with the gentleman, and caused his mule to be secretly held in readiness, that they might set out at the proper time. But God willed it that his mother should that day be garnishing a most beautiful cabinet,[2] and needed all her children with her to help her, and thus the young Prince lingered there until the hour was past.

There was, however, no hindrance to the departure of the butler, who had brought his sister-in-law to his house, riding behind him,[3] and had

[2] The French word here is *cabinet*, which some English translators have rendered as "little room." We think, however, with the Bibliophile Jacob, that the allusion is to an article of furniture, such as we ourselves still call a cabinet in England, though in France the word has virtually lost that sense.—ED.

[3] The MSS. do not say whether she rode on a pillion, or simply bestrode the horse. This last fashion was still common at this period and long afterwards, even among women of high degree. See, for instance, several of the enamels in the Louvre, notably one which depicts Henry II. of France with Diana of Poitiers riding behind him. The practice is also referred to in a sixteenth century ballad. "La Superfluité des habitz des Dames" (*Anciennes Poésies Françoises*. Bib. Elzev. 1858, p. 308).—M.

made his wife feign sickness, so that when they were already on horseback she had come and said that she could not go with them. But now, seeing that the hour at which the Prince should have come was gone by, he said to his sister-in-law—

"I think we may now return to the town."

"What is there to hinder us from doing so?" asked Frances.

"Why," said the butler, "I was waiting here for my lord, who had promised me that he would come."

When his sister-in-law heard this wickedness, she replied—

"Do not wait for him, brother, for I know that he will not come to-day."

The brother-in-law believed her and brought her back again, and when she had reached home she let him know her extreme anger, telling him that he was the devil's servant, and did yet more than he was commanded, for she was sure that the plan had been devised by him and the gentleman and not by the young Prince, whose money he would rather earn by aiding him in his follies, than by doing the duty of a good servant. However, now that she knew his real nature, she would remain no longer in his house, and thereupon indeed she sent for her brother to take

her to his own country, and immediately left her sister's dwelling.

Having thus failed in his attempt, the butler went to the castle to learn what had prevented the arrival of the young Prince, and he had scarcely come thither when he met the Prince himself sallying forth on his mule, and attended only by the gentleman in whom he put so much trust.

"Well," the Prince asked of him, "is she still there?"

Thereupon the butler related all that had taken place.

The young Prince was deeply vexed at having failed in his plan, which he looked upon as the very last that he could devise, but, seeing that it could not be helped, he sought out Frances so diligently that at last he met her in a gathering from which she could not escape. He then upbraided her very harshly for her cruelty towards him, and for having left her brother-in-law, but she made answer that the latter was, in regard to herself, the worst and most dangerous man she had ever known, though he, the Prince, was greatly beholden to him, seeing that he was served by him not only with body and substance, but with soul and conscience as well.

When the Prince perceived by this that the

case was a hopeless one, he resolved to urge her no more, and esteemed her highly all his life.

Seeing this maiden's goodness, one of the said Prince's attendants desired to marry her, but to this she would not consent without the command and license of the young Prince, upon whom she had set all her affection; and this she caused to be made known to him, and with his approval the marriage was concluded. And so she lived all her life in good repute, and the young Prince bestowed great benefits upon her.[4]

"What shall we say to this, ladies? Have we hearts so base as to make our servants our masters —seeing that this woman was not to be subdued either by love or torment? Let us, I pray you, take example by her conduct and conquer ourselves, for this is the most meritorious conquest that we can make."

"I see but one thing to be regretted," said Oisille, "which is that these virtuous actions did not take place in the days of the old historians. Those who gave so much praise to their Lucretia would have neglected her to set down at length the virtues of this maiden."

"They are indeed so great," said Hircan, "that,

[4] We take this concluding paragraph from MS. 1520; it is deficient in ours.—L.

were it not for the solemn vow that we have taken to speak the truth, I could not believe her to have been what you describe. We have often seen sick persons turn in disgust from good and wholesome meats to eat such as are bad and hurtful, and in the same way this girl may have had some gentleman of her own estate for whose sake she despised all nobility."

But to this Parlemente replied that the girl's whole life showed that she had never loved any living man save him whom she loved more than her very life, though not more than her honour.

"Put that notion out of your head," said Saffredent, "and learn the origin of the term 'honour' as used among women; for perhaps those that speak so much of it are ignorant of how the name was devised. Know then that in the earliest times, when there was but little wickedness among men, love was so frank and strong that it was never concealed, and he who loved the most perfectly received most praise. But when greed and sinfulness fastened upon heart and honour, they drove out God and love, and in their place set up selfishness, hypocrisy and deceit. Then, when some ladies found that they fostered in their hearts the virtue of true love but that the word 'hypocrisy' was hateful among men, they adopted instead the word 'honour.' At last, too, even those who could feel no honourable love said that 'honour' forbade them, and cruelly made this a law for all, so that now even those who love perfectly

use concealment, holding virtue for a vice. But such as have an excellent understanding and a sound judgment never fall into any such error. They know the difference between darkness and light, and are aware that true honour consists in manifesting the purity of their hearts, (which should live upon love alone), and not in priding themselves on the vice of dissimulation."

"Yet," said Dagoucin, "it is said that the most secret love is the most worthy of praise."

"Ay, secret," said Simontault, "from the eyes of those who might misjudge it, but open and manifest at least to the two persons whom it concerns."

"So I take it," said Dagoucin, "but it would be better to have one of the two ignorant of it rather than have it known to a third. I believe that the love of the woman in the story was all the deeper for not being declared."

"Be that as it may," said Longarine, "virtue should be esteemed, and the highest virtue is to subdue one's own heart. Considering the opportunities that the maiden had of forgetting conscience and honour, and the virtue she displayed in all these opportunities and temptations by subduing her heart, will, and even him whom she loved better than herself, I say that she might well be called a strong woman. And, since you measure virtue by the mortification of self, I say that the lord deserved higher praise than she, if we remember the greatness of his love, his opportunities,

and his power. Yet he would not offend against that rule of true love which renders prince and peasant equal, but employed only such means as honour allows."

"There are many," said Hircan, "who would not have acted in the same way."

"So much the more is he to be esteemed," said Longarine, "in having subdued the common craftiness of men. He who can do evil and yet does it not is happy indeed."

"Your words," said Geburon, "remind me of one who was more afraid of doing wrong in the eyes of men than of offending against God, her honour and love."

"Then I pray you tell us the story," said Parlamente, "for I give you my vote."

"There are some persons," said Geburon, "who have no God, or, if they believe in one, think Him so far away that He can neither see nor know the wicked acts that they commit; or, if He does, imagine that He pays no heed to things here below, and is too careless to punish them. Of this opinion was a lady, whose name I will alter for the sake of her family, and whom I will call Jambicque.[5] She used often to say that a woman who had only God to deal with was very fortunate, if for the rest she was able to maintain her honour among men. But you will see, ladies, that her prudence and her hypocrisy did not prevent her

[5] Some of the MSS. give the name as Camele or Camille, which is also that adopted by Boaistuau.—L.

secret from being discovered, as will appear from her story, wherein the truth shall be set forth in full, except that the names of persons and places will be changed."

S. Freudenberg Inv. L. Gallon Sculp.

## *TALE XLIII.*

*Jambicque, preferring the praise of the world to a good conscience, strove to appear before men other than she really was; but her friend and lover discovered her hypocrisy by means of a little chalk-mark, and made known to everybody the wickedness that she was at such pains to hide.*

THERE dwelt in a very handsome castle a high and mighty Princess, who had in her train a very haughty lady called Jambicque.[1] The latter had so deceived her mistress that the Princess did nothing save by her advice, deeming her the discreetest and most virtuous lady of her day.

[1] There are no means of positively identifying this woman. Brantôme, who refers at length to the above tale in his *Vies des Dames Galantes* (Lalanne's edition, pp. 236–8), implies that he knew her name but would not tell it. He says, however, that "she was a widow and lady of honour to a very great Princess, and knew better how to play the prude than any other lady at Court."—M.

This Jambicque used greatly to inveigh against wanton passion, and whenever she perceived any gentleman in love with one of her companions, she would chide them with much harshness, and, by making ill report of them to her mistress, often cause them to be rebuked; hence she was feared far more than she was loved by all the household. As for herself, she never spoke to a man except in a loud voice, and with much haughtiness, and was therefore reputed a deadly enemy to all love. Nevertheless, it was quite otherwise with her heart, for there was a gentleman in her mistress's service towards whom she entertained so strong a passion that, at last, she could no longer endure it.[2]

[2] Brantôme writes as follows concerning the gentleman referred to above: "According to what I have heard from my mother, [Anne de Vivonne, wife of Francis de Bourdeille], who was in the Queen of Navarre's service and knew some of her secrets, and was herself one of the narrators [of the *Heptameron*, *i.e.*, Ennasuite], this gentleman was my late uncle La Chastaigneraye, who was brusque, hasty, and rather fickle. The tale, however, is so disguised as to hide this, for my said uncle was never in the service of the great Princess, who was mistress of the lady [Jambicque], but in that of the King her brother." This shows the Princess to have been Queen Margaret herself; and Jambicque, being described by Brantôme as a widow and lady of honour to the Princess, might possibly be Blanche de Tournon (Madame de Chastillon), concerning whom see vol. i. of the present work, p. 84 (note 7) and pp. 122-4. Her successor as lady of honour to Margaret was Brantôme's own grandmother, of whom he says that she was not so shrewd, artful, or ready-witted in love matters as her predecessor. On the other hand, Blanche de Tournon

The regard which she had for honour and good name caused her to conceal her affection, but after she had been consumed by this passion for a full year, being unwilling to find relief as other lovers do in look and speech, she felt her heart so aflame that, in the end, she sought the final cure. And she resolved that it were better to satisfy her desire with none but God in the secret of her heart, rather than speak of it to a man who might some time make it known.

After taking this resolve, she chanced to be one day in her mistress's apartment, when, looking out upon a terrace, she perceived walking there the man whom she so dearly loved. She gazed upon him until the falling darkness was hiding him from her sight, when she called a little page of hers, and pointing to the gentleman, said—

"Do you see yonder that gentleman who wears a crimson satin doublet and cloak of lynx fur? Go and tell him that one of his friends would speak with him in the garden gallery."

As soon as the page was gone, she herself passed through her mistress's wardrobe and into

must have been over forty when La Chastaigneraye engaged in this adventure, even allowing that he was only a youth at the time.—ED.

the gallery, having first put on her low hood and half-mask.[3]

When the gentleman was come to where she was waiting, she immediately shut the two doors by which they might have been surprised, and then, without taking off her mask, embraced him very closely, and in the softest whisper imaginable said—

"For a long time, sweetheart, the love I bear you has made me desire time and place for speaking with you, but fearfulness for my honour was for a while so strong as to oblige me, in my own despite, to conceal my passion. Albeit, in the end, the strength of love has vanquished fear, and, in the knowledge that I have of your honour, I protest to you that if you will promise to love me without ever speaking of the matter to any one, or asking of me who I am, I will be your true and faithful sweetheart, and will never love any man but you. But I would rather die than that you should know who I am."

The gentleman promised her what she asked, which made her very ready to do as much for him, namely, to refuse him nothing he might desire to have. It was between five and six o'clock in winter-time, so that he could see nothing of the

[3] See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 27.

lady, but by the touch of her dress he perceived that it was of velvet, which at that time was not worn every day except by ladies of high and mighty lineage. And so far as his hand could let him judge of what was beneath, there was nothing there that was not excellent, trim, and plump. Accordingly, he was at pains to entertain her as well as he was able. She on her part did no less, and the gentleman readily perceived that she was a married woman.

She desired afterwards to return immediately to the place whence she had come, but the gentleman said to her—

"I esteem greatly the undeserved favour that you have shown me, but I shall esteem still more that which you may bestow at my request. So well pleased am I by this your kindness, that I would fain learn whether I may not look for more of the same sort, and, also, in what manner you would have me act; for, knowing you not, I shall be powerless to woo."

"Have no concern," said the lady, "about that. You may rest assured that every evening, before my mistress sups, I shall not fail to send for you, and do you be in readiness on the terrace where you were just now. I shall merely send you word to remember what you have promised, and in this way you will know that I am waiting for

you here in the gallery. But if you hear talk of going to table, you may withdraw for that day or else come into our mistress's apartment. Above all things, I pray you will never seek to know me, if you would not forthwith bring our friendship to an end."

So the lady and the gentleman went their several ways. And although their love affair lasted for a great while, he could never learn who she was. He pondered much upon the matter, wondering within himself who she might be. He could not imagine that any woman in the world would fain be unseen and unloved; and, having heard some foolish preacher say that no one who had looked upon the face of the devil could ever love him, he suspected that his mistress might be some evil spirit.

In this perplexity he resolved to try and find out who it was that entertained him so well, and when next she sent for him he brought some chalk, and, while embracing her, marked the back of her shoulder without her knowledge. Then, as soon as she was gone, the gentleman went with all speed to his mistress's apartment, and stood beside the door in order to look from behind at the shoulders of those ladies that might go in.

He saw Jambicque enter among the rest, but

with so haughty a bearing that he feared to look at her as keenly as at the others, and felt quite sure that it could not have been she. Nevertheless, when her back was turned, he perceived the chalk mark, whereat he was so greatly astonished that he could hardly believe his eyes.

However, after considering both her figure, which was just such a one as his hands had known, and her features, which he recognised in the same way, he perceived that it was indeed none other than herself. And he was well pleased to think that a woman who had never been reputed to have a lover, and who had refused so many worthy gentlemen, should have chosen himself alone.

But Love, which is ever changeful of mood, could not suffer him to live long in such repose, but, filling him with self-conceit and hope, led him to make known his love, in the expectation that she would then hold him still more dear.

One day, when the Princess was in the garden, the lady Jambicque went to walk in a pathway by herself. The gentleman, seeing that she was alone, went up to converse with her, and, as though he had never elsewhere met her, spoke as follows—

"Mistress, I have long borne towards you in my heart an affection which, through dread of

displeasing you, I have never ventured to reveal. But now my pain has come to be such that I can no longer endure it and live, for I think that no man could ever have loved you as I do."

The Lady Jambicque would not allow him to finish his discourse, but said to him in great wrath—

"Did you ever hear or see that I had sweetheart or lover? I trow not, and am indeed astonished to find you bold enough to address such words to a virtuous woman like me. You have lived in the same house long enough to know that I shall never love other than my husband; beware, then, of speaking further after this fashion."

At this hypocrisy the gentleman could not refrain from laughing and saying to her—

"You are not always so stern, madam, as you are now. What boots it to use such concealment towards me? Is it not better to have a perfect than an imperfect love?"

"I have no love for you," replied Jambicque, "whether perfect or imperfect, except such as I bear to the rest of my mistress's servants. But if you speak further to me as you have spoken now, I shall perhaps have such hatred for you as may be to your hurt."

However, the gentleman persisted in his discourse.

"Where," said he, "is the kindness that you show me when I cannot see you? Why do you withhold it from me now when the light suffers me to behold both your beauty and your excellent and perfect grace?"

Jambicque, making a great sign of the cross, replied—

"Either you have lost your understanding or you are the greatest liar alive. Never in my life have I to my knowledge shown you more kindness or less than I do at this moment, and I pray you therefore tell me what it is you mean."

Then the unhappy gentleman, thinking to better his fortune with her, told her of the place where he had met her, and of the chalk-mark which he had made in order to recognise her, on hearing which she was so beside herself with anger as to tell him that he was the wickedest of men, and that she would bring him to repent of the foul falsehood that he had invented against her.

The gentleman, knowing how well she stood with her mistress, sought to soothe her, but he found it impossible to do so; for, leaving him where he stood, she furiously betook herself to her mistress, who, loving Jambicque as she did

herself, left all the company to come and speak with her, and, on finding her in such great wrath, inquired of her what the matter was. Thereupon Jambicque, who had no wish to hide it, related all the gentleman's discourse, and this she did so much to the unhappy man's disadvantage, that on the very same evening his mistress commanded him to withdraw forthwith to his own home without speaking with anyone and to stay there until he should be sent for. And this he did right speedily, for fear of worse.[4]

So long as Jambicque dwelt with her mistress, the gentleman returned not to the Princess's

[4] It has been mentioned in note 2 that the gentleman in question was Brantôme's uncle La Chastaigneraye. Born, according to most accounts, in 1520, Francis de Vivonne, Lord of La Chastaigneraye, was a godson of Francis I., and early displayed marked skill and prowess in all bodily exercises and feats of arms. He was, however, of a very quarrelsome disposition, and had several duels. A dispute arising between him and Guy de Chabot, Lord of Jarnac, they solicited permission to fight, but Francis I. would not accord it, and it was only after the accession of Henry II. that the encounter took place. The spot fixed upon was the park of St. Germain-en-Laye, and the King and the whole Court were present (July 10, 1547). In the result, La Chastaigneraye was literally ham-strung by a back-thrust known to this day as the *coup de Jarnac*. The victor thereupon begged the King to accept his adversary's life and person, and Henry, after telling Jarnac that "he had fought like Cæsar and spoken like Cicero," caused La Chastaigneraye to be carried to his tent that his wound might be dressed. Deeply humiliated by his defeat, however, the vanquished combatant tore off his bandages and bled to death. — ED.

house, nor did he ever have tidings of her who had vowed to him that he should lose her as soon as he might seek her out.[5]

"By this tale, ladies, you may see how one who preferred the world's esteem to a good conscience lost both the one and the other. For now may the eyes of all men read what she strove to hide from those of her lover, and so, whilst fleeing the derision of one, she has incurred the derision of all. Nor can she be held excused on the score of simplicity and artless love, for which all men should have pity, but she must be condemned twice over for having concealed her wickedness with the twofold cloak of honour and glory, and for making herself appear before God and man other than she really was. He, however, who gives not His glory to another, took

[5] After referring to this tale Brantôme adds that he had heard tell of another Court lady who was minded to imitate Jambicque, but who, "every time she returned from her assignation, went straight to her room, and let one of her serving maids examine her on all sides to see if she were marked. By this means she guarded herself against being surprised and recognised, and indeed was never marked until at her ninth assignation, when the mark was at once discovered by her women. And thereupon, for fear of scandal and opprobrium, she broke off her intrigue and never more returned to the appointed spot. Some one said 'twould have been better if she had let her lover mark her as often as he liked, and each time have had his marks effaced, for in this wise she would have reaped a double pleasure—contentment in love and satisfaction at duping her lover, who, like he who seeks the Philosopher's Stone, would have toiled hard to discover and identify her, without ever succeeding in doing so."—(Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, pp. 236–8).—M.

this cloak from off her and so brought her to double shame."

"Her wickedness," said Oisille, "was without excuse. None can defend her when God, Honour, and even Love are her accusers."

"Nay," said Hircan, "Pleasure and Folly may; they are the true chief advocates of the ladies."

"If we had no other advocates," said Parlamente, "than those you name, our cause would indeed be ill supported; but those who are vanquished by pleasure ought no longer to be called women but rather men, whose reputation is merely exalted by frenzy and lust. When a man takes vengeance upon his enemy and slays him for giving him the lie, he is deemed all the more honourable a gentleman for it; and so, too, when he loves a dozen women besides his own wife. But the reputation of women has a different foundation, that, namely, of gentleness, patience and chastity."

"You speak of the discreet," said Hircan.

"Yes," returned Parlamente, "because I will know none others."

"If none were wanton," said Nomerfide, "those who would fain be believed by all the world must often have lied."

"Pray, Nomerfide," said Geburon, "receive my vote, and forget that you are a woman, in order that we may learn what some men that are accounted truthful say of the follies of your sex."

"Since virtue compels me to it, and you have

made it my turn, I will tell you what I know. I have not heard any lady or gentleman present speak otherwise than to the disadvantage of the Grey Friars, and out of pity I have resolved to speak well of them in the story that I am now about to relate."

## *TALE XLIV.* (A).

*In reward for not having concealed the truth, the Lord of Sedan doubled the alms of a Grey Friar, who thus received two pigs instead of one.*[1]

To the castle of Sedan once came a Grey Friar to ask my Lady of Sedan, who was of the house of Crouy,[2] for a pig, which she was wont to give to his Order every year as alms.

[1] This tale, though it figures in all the MSS., does not appear in Gruget's edition of the *Heptameron*, but is there replaced by the one that follows, XLIV. (B).—Ed.

[2] This Lady of Sedan is Catherine de Croï, daughter of Philip VI. de Croï, Count of Chimay. In 1491 she married Robert II. de la Marck, Duke of Bouillon, Lord of Sedan, Fleuranges, &c., who was long the companion in arms of Bayard and La Trémoïlle. Robert II. lost the duchy of Bouillon through the conquests of Charles V., and one of the clauses of the treaty of Cambrai (the "Ladies' Peace") was that Francis I. would in no wise assist him to regain it. His eldest son by Catherine de Croï was the

My Lord of Sedan, who was a prudent man and a merry talker, had the good father to eat at his table, and in order to put him on his mettle said to him, among other things—

"Good father, you do well to make your collection while you are yet unknown. I greatly fear that, if once your hypocrisy be found out, you will no longer receive the bread of poor children, earned by the sweat of their fathers."

The Grey Friar was not abashed by these words, but replied—

"Our Order, my lord, is so securely founded that it will endure as long as the world exists. Our foundation, indeed, cannot fail so long as there are men and women on the earth."

My Lord of Sedan, being desirous of knowing on what foundation the existence of the Grey Friars was thus based, urgently begged the father to tell him.

After making many excuses, the Friar at last replied—

"Since you are pleased to command me to tell you, you shall hear. Know, then, my lord, that our foundation is the folly of women, and that so

celebrated Marshal de Fleuranges, "the young adventurer," who left such curious memoirs behind him. Robert II. died in 1535, his son surviving him a couple of years.—Anselme's *Histoire Généalogique*, vol. vii. p. 167.—L. and B. J.

long as there be a wanton or foolish woman in the world we shall not die of hunger."

My Lady of Sedan, who was very passionate, was in such wrath on hearing these words, that, had her husband not been present, she would have dealt harshly with the Grey Friar; and indeed she swore roundly that he should not have the pig that she had promised him; but the Lord of Sedan, finding that he had not concealed the truth, swore that he should have two, and caused them to be sent to his monastery.

"You see, ladies, how the Grey Friar, being sure that the favour of the ladies could not fail him, contrived, by concealing nothing of the truth, to win the favour and alms of men. Had he been a flatterer and dissembler, he would have been more pleasing to the ladies, but not so profitable to himself and his brethren."

The tale was not concluded without making the whole company laugh, and especially such among them as knew the Lord and Lady of Sedan. And Hircan said—"The Grey Friars, then, should never preach with intent to make women wise, since their folly is of so much service to the Order."

"They do not preach to them," said Parlamente, "with intent to make them wise, but only to make them think themselves so. Women who are altogether worldly and foolish do not give them much alms; nevertheless, those who think themselves the

wisest because they go often to monasteries, and carry paternosters marked with a death's head, and wear caps lower than others, must also be accounted foolish, for they rest their salvation on their confidence in the holiness of wicked men, whom they are led by a trifling semblance to regard as demigods."

"But who could help believing them," said Ennasuite, "since they have been ordained by our prelates to preach the Gospel to us and rebuke our sins?"

"Those who have experienced their hypocrisy," said Parlamente, "and who know the difference between the doctrine of God and that of the devil."

"Jesus!" said Ennasuite. "Can you think that these men would dare to preach false doctrine?"

"Think?" replied Parlamente. "Nay, I am sure that they believe anything but the Gospel. I speak only of the bad among them; for I know many worthy men who preach the Scriptures in all purity and simplicity, and live without reproach, ambition, or covetousness, and in such chastity as is unfeigned and free. However, the streets are not paved with such as these, but are rather distinguished by their opposites; and the good tree is known by its fruit."

"In very sooth," said Ennasuite, "I thought we were bound on pain of mortal sin to believe all they tell us from the pulpit as truth, that is, when they speak of what is in the Holy Scriptures, or cite the expositions of holy doctrines divinely inspired."

"For my part," said Parlamente, "I cannot but see that there are men of very corrupt faith among them.

I know that one of them, a Doctor of Theology and a Principal in their Order,[3] sought to persuade many of the brethren that the Gospel was no more worthy of belief than Cæsar's Commentaries or any other histories written by learned men of authority; and from the hour I heard that I would believe no preacher's word unless I found it in harmony with the Word of God, which is the true touchstone for distinguishing between truth and falsehood."

"Be assured," said Oisille, "that those who read it constantly and with humility will never be led into error by deceits or human inventions; for whosoever has a mind filled with truth cannot believe a lie."

"Yet it seems to me," said Simontault, "that a simple person is more readily deceived than another."

"Yes," said Longarine, "if you deem foolishness to be the same thing as simplicity."

"I affirm," replied Simontault, "that a good, gentle and simple woman is more readily deceived than one who is wily and wicked."

"I think," said Nomerfide, "that you must know of one overflowing with such goodness, and so I give you my vote that you may tell us of her."

"Since you have guessed so well," said Simontault, "I will indeed tell you of her, but you must promise not to weep. Those who declare, ladies, that your

[3] In MS. No. 1520 this passage runs, "a Doctor of Theology named Colimant, a great preacher and a Principal in their Order." However, none of the numerous works on the history of the Franciscans makes any mention of a divine called Colimant.—B. J.

craftiness surpasses that of men would find it hard to bring forward such an instance as I am now about to relate, wherein I propose to show you not only the exceeding craftiness of a husband, but also the simplicity and goodness of his wife."

S. Freudenberg Inv. L. Halbou Sculp.

## *TALE XLIV.* (B).

*Concerning the subtlety of two lovers in the enjoyment of their love, and the happy issue of the latter.*[1]

IN the city of Paris there lived two citizens of middling condition, of whom one had a profession, while the other was a silk mercer. These two were very old friends and constant companions, and so it happened that the son of the former, a young man, very presentable in good company, and called James, used often by his father's favour to visit the mercer's house. This, however, he did for the sake of the mercer's beautiful daughter named Frances, whom he loved; and so well did James contrive

[1] This is the tale given by Gruget in his edition of the *Heptameron*, in lieu of the preceding one.—ED.

matters with her, that he came to know her to be no less loving than loved.

Whilst matters were in this state, however, a camp was formed in Provence in view of withstanding the descent of Charles of Austria,[2] and James, being called upon the list, was obliged to betake himself to the army. At the very beginning of the campaign his father passed from life into death, the tidings whereof brought him double sorrow, on the one part for the loss of his father, and on the other for the difficulty he should have on his return in seeing his sweetheart as often as he had hoped.

As time went on, the first of these griefs was forgotten and the other increased. Since death is a natural thing, and for the most part befalls the father before the children, the sadness it causes gradually disappears; but love, instead of bringing us death, brings us life through the procreation of children, in whom we have immortality, and this it is which chiefly causes our desires to increase.

James, therefore, when he had returned to Paris, thought or cared for nothing save how

[2] Charles V. entered Provence by way of Piedmont in the summer of 1536, and invested Marseilles. A scarcity of supplies and much sickness among his troops compelled him, however, to raise the siege.—M.

he might renew his frequent visits to the mercer's house, and so, under cloak of pure friendship for him, traffic in his dearest wares. On the other hand, during his absence, Frances had been urgently sought by others, both because of her beauty and of her wit, and also because she was long since come to marriageable years; but whether it was that her father was avaricious, or that, since she was his only daughter, he was over anxious to establish her well, he failed to perform his duty in the matter. This, however, tended but little to her honour, for in these days people speak ill of one long before they have any reason to do so, and particularly in aught that concerns the chastity of a beautiful woman or maid. Her father did not shut his ears or eyes to the general gossip, nor seek resemblance with many others who, instead of rebuking wrong-doing, seem rather to incite their wives and children to it, for he kept her with such strictness that even those who sought her with offers of marriage could see her but seldom, and then only in presence of her mother.

It were needless to ask whether James found all this hard of endurance. He could not conceive that such rigour should be without weighty reason, and therefore wavered greatly between love and jealousy. However, he resolved at all

risks to learn the cause, but wished first of all to know whether her affection was the same as before; he therefore set about this, and coming one morning to church, he placed himself near her to hear mass, and soon perceived by her countenance that she was no less glad to see him than he was to see her. Accordingly, knowing that the mother was less stern than the father, he was sometimes, when he met them on their way to church, bold enough to accost them as though by chance, and with a familiar and ordinary greeting; all, however, being done expressly so that he might the better work his ends.

To be brief, when the year of mourning for his father was drawing to an end, he resolved, on laying aside his weeds, to cut a good figure and do credit to his forefathers; and of this he spoke to his mother, who approved his design; for having but two children, himself and a daughter already well and honourably mated, she greatly desired to see him suitably married. And, indeed, like the worthy lady that she was, she still further incited his heart in the direction of virtue by countless instances of other young men of his own age who were making their way unaided, or at least were showing themselves worthy of those from whom they sprang.

It now only remained to determine where they should equip themselves, and the mother said—

"I am of opinion, James, that we should go to our friend Master Peter,"—that is, to the father of Frances—"for, knowing us, he will not cheat us."

His mother was indeed tickling him where he itched; however, he held firm and replied—

"We will go where we may find the cheapest and the best. Still," he added, "for the sake of his friendship with my departed father, I am willing that we should visit him first."

Matters being thus contrived, the mother and son went one morning to see Master Peter, who made them welcome; for traders, as you know, are never backward in this respect. They caused great quantities of all kinds of silk to be displayed before them, and chose what they required; but they could not agree upon the price, for James haggled on purpose, because his sweetheart's mother did not come in. So at last they went away without buying anything, in order to see what could be done elsewhere. But James could find nothing so handsome as in his sweetheart's house, and thither after a while they returned.

The mercer's wife was now there and gave them the best reception imaginable, and after

such bargaining as is common in shops of the kind, during which Peter's wife proved even harder than her husband, James said to her—

"In sooth, madam, you are very hard to deal with. I can see how it is; we have lost my father, and our friends recognise us no longer."

So saying, he pretended to weep and wipe his eyes at thought of his departed father; but 'twas done in order to further his design.

The good widow, his mother, took the matter in perfect faith, and on her part said—

"We are as little visited since his death as if we had never been known. Such is the regard in which poor widows are held!"

Upon this the two women exchanged fresh declarations of affection, and promised to see each other oftener than ever. While they were thus discoursing, there came in other traders, whom the master himself led into the back shop. Then the young man perceived his opportunity, and said to his mother—

"I have often on feast days seen this good lady going to visit the holy places in our neighbourhood, and especially the convents. Now if, when passing, she would sometimes condescend to take wine with us, she would do us at once pleasure and honour."

The mercer's wife, who suspected no harm,

replied that for more than a fortnight past she had intended to go thither, that, if it were fair, she would probably do so on the following Sunday, and that she would then certainly visit the lady at her house. This affair being concluded, the bargain for the silk quickly followed, since, for the sake of a little money, 'twould have been foolish to let slip so excellent an opportunity.

When matters had been thus contrived, and the merchandise taken away, James, knowing that he could not alone achieve so difficult an enterprise, was constrained to make it known to a faithful friend named Oliver, and they took such good counsel together that nothing now remained but to put their plan into execution.

Accordingly, when Sunday was come, the mercer's wife and her daughter, on returning from worship, failed not to visit the widow, whom they found talking with a neighbour in a gallery that looked upon the garden, while her daughter was walking in the pathways with James and Oliver.

When James saw his sweetheart, he so controlled himself that his countenance showed no change, and in this sort went forward to receive the mother and her daughter. Then, as the old commonly seek the old, the three ladies sat down together on a bench with their backs to the garden,

whither the lovers gradually made their way, and at last reached the place where were the other two. Thus meeting, they exchanged some courtesies and then began to walk about once more, whereupon the young man related his pitiful case to Frances, and this so well that, while unwilling to grant, she yet durst not refuse what he sought; and he could indeed see that she was in a sore strait. It must, however, be understood that, while thus discoursing, they often, to take away all ground for suspicion, passed and repassed in front of the shelter-place where the worthy dames were seated—talking the while on commonplace and ordinary matters, and at times disporting themselves through the garden.

At last, in the space of half-an-hour, when the good women had become well accustomed to this behaviour, James made a sign to Oliver, who played his part with the girl that was with him so cleverly, that she did not perceive the two lovers going into a close filled with cherry trees, and well shut in by tall rose trees and gooseberry bushes.[3] They made show of going thither

[3] Large gardens and enclosures were then plentiful in the heart of Paris. Forty years ago, when the Boulevard Sebastopol was laid out, it was found that many of the houses in the ancient Rues St. Martin and St. Denis had, in their rear, gardens of considerable extent containing century-old trees, the existence of which had never been suspected by the passers-by in those then cramped and dingy thoroughfares.—M.

in order to gather some almonds which were in a corner of the close, but their purpose was to gather plums.

Accordingly, James, instead of giving his sweetheart a green gown, gave her a red one, and its colour even came into her face through finding herself surprised sooner than she had expected. And these plums of theirs being ripe, they plucked them with such expedition that Oliver himself had not believed it possible, but that he perceived the girl to droop her gaze and look ashamed. This taught him the truth, for she had before walked with head erect, with no fear lest the vein in her eye, which ought to be red, should take an azure hue. However, when James perceived her perturbation, he recalled her to herself by fitting remonstrances.

Nevertheless, while making the next two or three turns about the garden, she would not refrain from tears and sighs, or from saying again and again—"Alas! was it for this you loved me? If only I could have imagined it! Heavens! what shall I do? I am ruined for life. What will you now think of me? I feel sure you will respect me no longer, if, at least, you are one of those that love but for their own pleasure. Alas, why did I not die before falling into such an error?"

She shed many tears while uttering these words, but James comforted her with many promises and oaths, and so, before they had gone thrice again round the garden, or James had signalled to his comrade, they once more entered the close, but by another path. And there, in spite of all, she could not but receive more delight from the second green gown than from the first; from which moment her satisfaction was such that they took counsel together how they might see each other with more frequency and convenience until her father should see fit to consent.

In this matter they were greatly assisted by a young woman, who was neighbour to Master Peter; she had some kinship with James, and was a good friend to Frances. And in this way, from what I can understand, they continued without scandal until the celebration of the marriage, when Frances, being an only child, proved to be very rich for a trader's daughter. James had, however, to wait for the greater part of his fortune until the death of his father-in-law, for the latter was so grasping a man that he seemed to think one hand capable of robbing him of that which he held in the other.[4]

[4] This reminds one of Molière's Harpagon, when he requires La Flèche to show him his hands. See *L'Avare*, act i. sc. iii.—M.

"In this story, ladies, you see a love affair well begun, well carried on, and better ended. For although it is a common thing among you men to scorn a girl or woman as soon as she has freely given what you chiefly seek in her, yet this young man was animated by sound and sincere love; and finding in his sweetheart what every husband desires in the girl he weds, and knowing, moreover, that she was of good birth, and discreet in all respects, save for the error into which he himself had led her, he would not act the adulterer or be the cause of an unhappy marriage elsewhere. And for this I hold him worthy of high praise."

"Yet," said Oisille, "they were both to blame, ay, and the third party also who assisted or at least concurred in a rape."

"Do you call that a rape," said Saffredent, "in which both parties are agreed? Is there any marriage better than one thus resulting from secret love? The proverb says that marriages are made in heaven, but this does not hold of forced marriages, nor of such as are made for money or are deemed to be completely sanctioned as soon as the parents have given their consent."

"You may say what you will," said Oisille, "but we must recognise that obedience is due to parents, or, in default of them, to other kinsfolk. Otherwise, if all were permitted to marry at will, how many horned marriages should we not find? Is it to be presumed that a young man and a girl of twelve or

fifteen years can know what is good for them? If we examined into the happiness of marriages on the whole, we should find that at least as many love-matches have turned out ill as those that were made under compulsion. Young people, who do not know what is good for them, attach themselves heedlessly to the first that comes; then by degrees they find out their error and fall into others that are still greater. On the other hand, most of those who act under compulsion proceed by the advice of people who have seen more and have more judgment than the persons concerned, and so when these come to feel the good that was before unknown to them, they rejoice in it and embrace it with far more eagerness and affection."

"True, madam," said Hircan, "but you have forgotten that the girl was of full age and marriageable, and that she was aware of her father's injustice in letting her virginity grow musty rather than rub the rust off his crown pieces. And do you not know that nature is a jade? She loved and was loved; she found her happiness close to her hand, and she may have remembered the proverb, 'She that will not when she may, when she will she shall have nay.' All these things, added to her wooer's despatch, gave her no time to resist. Further, you have heard that immediately afterwards her face showed that some noteworthy change had been wrought in her. She was perhaps annoyed at the shortness of the time afforded her to decide whether the thing were good

or bad, for no great pressing was needed to make her try a second time."

"Now, for my part," said Longarine, "I can find no excuse for such conduct, except that I approve the good faith shown by the youth who, comporting himself like an honest man, would not forsake her, but took her such as he had made her. In this respect, considering the corruption and depravity of the youth of the present day, I deem him worthy of high praise. I would not for all that seek to excuse his first fault, which, in fact, amounted to rape in respect to the daughter, and subornation with regard to the mother."

"No, no," said Dagoucin, "there was neither rape nor subornation. Everything was done by mere consent, both on the part of the mothers, who did not prevent it (though, indeed, they were deceived), and on that of the daughter, who was pleased by it, and so never complained."

"It was all the result," said Parlamente, "of the great kindliness and simplicity of the mercer's wife, who unwittingly led the maiden to the slaughter."

"Nay, to the wedding," said Simontault, "where such simplicity was no less profitable to the girl than it once was hurtful to one who suffered herself to be readily duped by her husband."

"Since you know such a story," said Nomerfide, "I give you my vote that you may tell it to us."

"I will indeed do so," said Simontault, "but you must promise not to weep. Those who declare,

ladies, that your craftiness surpasses that of men, would find it hard to bring forward such an instance as I will now relate, wherein I propose to show you not only the great craftiness of a husband, but the exceeding simplicity and goodness of his wife."

## TALE XLV.

*At his wife's request, an upholsterer of Tours gave the Innocents to his serving-maid, with whom he was in love; but he did so after such a fashion as to let her have what belonged by right only to his wife, who, for her part, was such a simpleton that she could never believe her husband had so wronged her, albeit she had abundant warning thereof from a neighbour.*

IN the city of Tours dwelt a man of shrewd and sound understanding, who was upholsterer to the late Duke of Orleans,[1] son of King Francis the

[1] Charles of France, Duke of Orleans, Bourbonnais, Angoumois and Châtelherault, Count of Clermont, La Marche, and Civray, Governor and Lieutenant-General of Champagne and Brie. He has been referred to in the Memoir of Queen Margaret, *ante*, vol. i. pp. xxxvi., xlvii.–viii. Born at St. Germain in January 1521, the Duke of Orleans took part in several military expeditions, and gave proof of much ability as a commander. He died, according to some accounts, of a pleurisy, and, according to others, of the plague, in 1545. The above story was evidently written subsequent to that date, as Queen Margaret refers to him as "the late Duke of Orleans."—L.

First; and although this upholsterer had, through sickness, become deaf, he had nevertheless lost nothing of his wit, which, in regard both to his trade and to other matters, was as shrewd as any man's. And how he was able to avail himself of it you shall hear.

He had married a virtuous and honourable woman, with whom he lived in great peace and quietness. He was very fearful of displeasing her, whilst she, on her part, sought in all things to obey him. But, for all the affection that he bore her, he was so charitably inclined that he would often give to his female neighbours that which by right belonged to his wife, though this he did as secretly as he was able.

There was in their house a very plump serving-maid with whom the upholsterer fell in love. Nevertheless, dreading lest his wife should know this, he often made show of scolding and rebuking her, saying that she was the laziest wench he had ever known, though this was no wonder, seeing that her mistress never beat her. And thus it came to pass that one day, while they were speaking about giving the Innocents,[2] the upholsterer said to his wife—

[2] Prior to the Reformation it was the custom, not only in France but throughout Europe, to whip children on the morning of Innocents' Day (December 28), in order, says Gregory in his treatise on the *Boy Bishop*, "that the memory of Herod's murder of the In-

"It were a charity to give them to that lazy wench of yours, but it should not be with your hand, for it is too feeble, and in like way your heart is too pitiful for such a task. If, however, I were to make use of mine, she would serve us better than she now does."

The poor woman, suspecting no harm, begged him to do execution upon the girl, confessing that she herself had neither strength nor heart for beating her.

The husband willingly accepted this commission, and, playing the part of a stern executioner, had purchase made of the finest rods that could be found. To show, moreover, how anxious he was not to spare the girl, he caused these rods to be steeped in pickle, so that his poor wife felt

nocents might stick the closer." This custom (concerning which see Haspinian, *De Orig. Festor. Christianor.* fol. 160) subsequently degenerated into a jocular usage, so far as the children were concerned, and town-gallants and country-swains commonly sought to surprise young women in bed, and make them play the part of the Innocents, more frequently than otherwise to the loss of their virtue. A story is told of a French nobleman who in taking leave of some ladies to join a hunting party, heard one of them whisper, "We shall sleep at our ease, and pass the Innocents without receiving them." This put the nobleman, a certain Seigneur du Rivau, on his mettle. "He kept his appointment," we are told, "galloped back twenty leagues at night, arrived at the lady's house at dawn on Innocents' Day, surprised her in bed, and used the privilege of the season." (Bohn's *Heptameron*, p. 301). Verses illustrative of the custom will be found in the works of Clement Marot, Jannet's edition, 1868, vol. iii. p. 7, and in those of Cholières, Jouaust's edition, 1879, vol. i. p. 224-6.—L. and Ed.

far more pity for her maid than suspicion of her husband.

Innocents' Day being come, the upholsterer rose early in the morning, and, going up to the room where the maid lay all alone, he gave her the Innocents in a different fashion to that which he had talked of with his wife. The maid wept full sore, but it was of no avail. Nevertheless, fearing lest his wife should come upon them, he fell to beating the bed-post with the rods which he had with him in such wise that he barked and broke them; and in this condition he brought them back to his wife, saying—

"Methinks, sweetheart, your maid will remember the Innocents."

When the upholsterer was gone out of the house, the poor servant threw herself upon her knees before her mistress, telling her that her husband had done her the greatest wrong that was ever done to a serving-maid. The mistress, however, thinking that this merely had reference to the flogging which she believed to have been given, would not suffer the girl to finish, but said to her—

"My husband did well, and only what I have for more than a month been urging him to do. If you were hurt I am very glad to hear it. You may lay it all at my door, and, what is more,

he did not even do as much as he ought to have done."

The serving-maid, finding that her mistress approved of the matter, thought that it could not be so great a sin as she had imagined, the more so as it had been brought to pass by a woman whose virtue was held in such high repute. Accordingly she never afterwards ventured to speak of it.

Her master, however, seeing that his wife was as content to be deceived as he was to deceive her, resolved that he would frequently give her this contentment, and so practised on the serving-maid, that she wept no more at receiving the Innocents.

He continued this manner of life for a great while, without his wife being any the wiser, until there came a time of heavy snow, when, having already given the girl the Innocents on the grass in his garden, he was minded to do the same in the snow. Accordingly, one morning before any one in the house was awake, he took the girl clad in nothing but her shift to make the crucifix in the snow, and while they were pelting each other in sport, they did not forget the game of the Innocents.

This sport, however, was observed by one of their female neighbours who had gone to her

window, which overlooked the garden, to see what manner of weather it was, and so wrathful was she at the evil sight, that she resolved to tell her good gossip of it, to the end that she might no longer suffer herself to be deceived by a wicked husband or served by a wanton jade.

After playing these fine pranks, the upholsterer looked about him to see whether any one could perceive him, and to his exceeding annoyance observed his neighbour at her window. But just as he was able to give any colour to his tapestry, so he bethought him to give such a colour to what he had done, that his neighbour would be no less deceived than his wife. Accordingly, as soon as he had gone back to bed again, he made his wife rise in nothing but her shift, and taking her into the garden as he had taken his serving-maid, he played with her for a long time in the snow even as he had played with the other. And then he gave her the Innocents in the same way as he had given them to the maid, and afterwards they returned to bed together.

When the good woman went to mass, her neighbour and excellent friend failed not to be there, and, while unwilling to say anything further, zealously begged of her to dismiss her serving-maid, who was, she said, a very wicked

and dangerous wench. This, however, the other would not do without knowing why she thought so ill of the girl, and at last her neighbour related how she had seen the wench that morning in the garden with her husband.

At this the good woman fell to laughing heartily, and said—

"Eh! gossip dear, 'twas myself!"

"What, gossip? Why she wore naught but her shift, and it was only five o'clock in the morning."

"In faith, gossip," replied the good woman, "'twas myself."

"They pelted each other with snow," the other went on, "on the breasts and elsewhere, as familiarly as could be."

"Eh! gossip, eh!" the good woman replied, "'twas myself."

"Nay, gossip," said the other, "I saw them afterwards doing something in the snow that to my mind is neither seemly nor right."

"Gossip," returned the good woman, "I have told you, and I tell you again, that it was myself and none other who did all that you say, for my good husband and I play thus familiarly together. And, I pray you, be not scandalised at this, for you know that we are bound to please our husbands."

So the worthy gossip went away, more wishful to possess such a husband for herself than she had been to talk about the husband of her friend; and when the upholsterer came home again his wife told him the whole story.

"Now look you, sweetheart," replied the upholsterer, "if you were not a woman of virtue and sound understanding we should long ago have been separated the one from the other. But I hope that God will continue to preserve us in our mutual love, to His own glory and our happiness."

"Amen to that, my dear," said the good woman, "and I hope that on my part you will never find aught to blame."[3]

"Unbelieving indeed, ladies, must be the man who, after hearing this true story, should hold you to be as crafty as men are; though, if we are not to wrong

[3] This tale is accounted by most critics and commentators to be the best in the *Heptameron*. Dunlop thinks it may have been borrowed from a *fabliau* composed by some *Trouvère* who had travelled in the East, and points out that it corresponds with the story of the *Shopkeeper's Wife* in Nakshebi's Persian Tales (*Tooti Nameh*). Had it been brought to France, however, in the manner suggested it would, like other tales, have found its way into the works of many sixteenth-century story-writers besides Queen Margaret. Such, however, is not the case, and curiously enough, so far as we can find, the tale, as given in the *Heptameron*, was never imitated until La Fontaine wrote his *Servante Justifiée* (*Contes, livre* ii. No. vi.), in the opening lines of which he expressly acknowledges his indebtedness to the Queen of Navarre.—ED.

either, and to give both man and wife the praise they truly deserve, we must needs admit that the better of the two was worth naught."

"The man," said Parlamente, "was marvellously wicked, for he deceived his servant on the one side and his wife on the other."

"Then you cannot have understood the story," said Hircan. "We are told that he contented them both in the same morning, and I consider it a highly virtuous thing, both for body and mind, to be able to say and do that which may make two opposites content."

"It was doubly wicked," said Parlamente, "to satisfy the simplicity of one by falsehood and the wickedness of the other by vice. But I am aware that sins, when brought before such judges as you, will always be forgiven."

"Yet I promise you," said Hircan, "that for my own part I shall never essay so great and difficult a task, for if I but render *you* content my day will not have been ill spent."

"If mutual love," said Parlamente, "cannot content the heart, nothing else can."

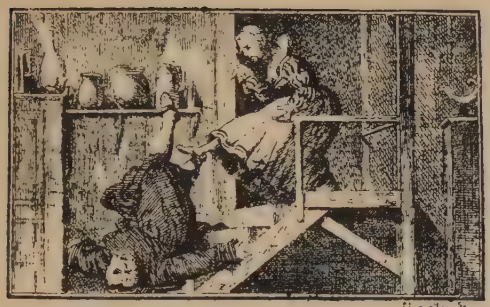
"In sooth," said Simontault, "I think there is no greater grief in the world than to love and not be loved."

"To be loved," said Parlamente, "it were needful to turn to such as love. Very often, however, those women who will not love are loved the most, while those men who love most strongly are loved the least."

"You remind me," said Oisille, "of a story which I had not intended to bring forward among such good ones."

"Still I pray you tell it us," said Simontault.

"That will I do right willingly," replied Oisille.



## *TALE XLVI.* (A).

*A Grey Friar named De Vale, being bidden to dinner at the house of the Judge of the Exempts in Angoulême, perceived that the Judge's wife (with whom he was in love) went up into the garret alone; thinking to surprise her, he followed her thither; but she dealt him such a kick in the stomach that he fell from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and fled out of the town to the house of a lady that had such great liking for those of his Order (foolishly believing them possessed of greater virtues than belong to them), that she entrusted him with the correction of her daughter, whom he lay with by force instead of chastising her for the sin of slothfulness, as he had promised her mother he would do.*[1]

IN the town of Angoulême, where Count Charles, father of King Francis, often abode, there dwelt a Grey Friar named De Vale, the same being held a learned man and a great preacher. One

[1] Boaistuau and Gruget omit this tale, and the latter replaces it by that numbered XLVI. (B). Count Charles of Angoulême having died on January 1, 1496, the incidents related above must have occurred at an earlier date.—L.

Advent this Friar preached in the town in presence of the Count, whereby he won such renown that those who knew him eagerly invited him to dine at their houses. Among others that did this was the Judge of the Exempts[2] of the county, who had wedded a beautiful and virtuous woman. The Friar was dying for love of her, yet lacked the hardihood to tell her so; nevertheless she perceived the truth, and held him in derision.

After he had given several tokens of his wanton purpose, he one day espied her going up into the garret alone. Thinking to surprise her, he followed, but hearing his footsteps she turned and asked whither he was going. "I am going after you," he replied, "to tell you a secret."

"Nay, good father," said the Judge's wife. "I will have no secret converse with such as you. If you come up any higher, you will be sorry for it."

Seeing that she was alone, he gave no heed to her words, but hastened up after her. She, however, was a woman of spirit, and when she saw the Friar at the top of the staircase, she gave him a kick in the stomach, and with the words, "Down! down! sir,"[3] cast him from the

[2] The *Exempt* was a police officer, and the functions of the *Juge des Exempts* were akin to those of a police magistrate.—ED.

[3] The French words here are "*Devallez, devallez, monsieur,*" whilst MS. No. 1520 gives, "*Monsieur de Vale, dévalés.*" In either case there is evidently a play upon the friar's name, which

top to the bottom. The poor father was so greatly ashamed at this, that, forgetting the hurt he had received in falling, he fled out of the town as fast as he was able. He felt sure that the lady would not conceal the matter from her husband; and indeed she did not, nor yet from the Count and Countess, so that the Friar never again durst come into their presence.

To complete his wickedness, he repaired to the house of a lady who preferred the Grey Friars to all other folk, and, after preaching a sermon or two before her, he cast his eyes upon her daughter, who was very beautiful. And as the maiden did not rise in the morning to hear his sermon, he often scolded her in presence of her mother, whereupon the latter would say to him—

"Would to God, father, that she had some taste of the discipline which you monks receive from one another."

The good father vowed that if she continued to be so slothful, he would indeed give her some of it, and her mother earnestly begged him to do so.

was possibly pronounced Vallés or Vallès. Adrien de Valois, it may be pointed out, rendered his name in Latin as *Valesius;* the county of Valois and that of Valais are one and the same; we continue calling the old French kings Valois, as their name was written, instead of Valais as it was pronounced, as witness, for instance, the nickname given to Henry III. by the lampooners of the League, "Henri dévalé." See also *post*, Tale XLVI. (B), note 2.—M. and Ed.

A day or two afterwards, he entered the lady's apartment, and, not seeing her daughter there, asked her where she was.

"She fears you so little," replied the lady, "that she is still in bed."

"There can be no doubt," said the Grey Friar, "that it is a very evil habit in young girls to be slothful. Few people think much of the sin of sloth, but for my part, I deem it one of the most dangerous there is, for the body as for the soul. You should therefore chastise her for it, and if you will give me the matter in charge, I will take good care that she does not lie abed at an hour when she ought to be praying to God."

The poor lady, believing him to be a virtuous man, begged him to be kind enough to correct her daughter, which he at once agreed to do, and, going up a narrow wooden staircase, he found the girl all alone in bed. She was sleeping very soundly, and while she slept he lay with her by force. The poor girl, waking up, knew not whether he were man or devil, but began to cry out as loudly as she could, and to call for help to her mother. But the latter, standing at the foot of the staircase, cried out to the Friar—"Have no pity on her, sir. Give it to her again, and chastise the naughty jade."

When the Friar had worked his wicked will,

he came down to the lady and said to her with a face all afire—"I think, madam, that your daughter will remember my discipline."

The mother thanked him warmly and then went upstairs, where she found her daughter making such lamentation as is to be expected from a virtuous woman who has suffered from so foul a crime. On learning the truth, the mother had search made everywhere for the Friar, but he was already far away, nor was he ever afterwards seen in the kingdom of France.

"You see, ladies, with how much security such commissions may be given to those that are unfit for them. The correction of men pertains to men and that of women to women; for women in the correction of men would be as pitiful as men in the correction of women would be cruel."

"Jesus! madam," said Parlamente, "what a base and wicked Friar!"

"Say rather," said Hircan, "what a foolish and witless mother to be led by hypocrisy into allowing so much familiarity to those who ought never to be seen except in church."

"In truth," said Parlamente, "I acknowledge that she was the most foolish mother imaginable; had she been as wise as the Judge's wife, she would rather have made him come down the staircase than go up. But what can you expect? The devil that is half-angel is the most dangerous of all, for he is so well

able to transform himself into an angel of light, that people shrink from suspecting him to be what he really is; and it seems to me that persons who are not suspicious are worthy of praise."

"At the same time," said Oisille, "people ought to suspect the evil that is to be avoided, especially those who hold a trust; for it is better to suspect an evil that does not exist than by foolish trustfulness to fall into one that does. I have never known a woman deceived through being slow to believe men's words, but many are there that have been deceived through being over prompt in giving credence to falsehood. Therefore I say that possible evil cannot be held in too strong suspicion by those that have charge of men, women, cities or states; for, however good the watch that is kept, wickedness and treachery are prevalent enough, and the shepherd who is not vigilant will always be deceived by the wiles of the wolf."

"Still," said Dagoucin, "a suspicious person cannot have a perfect friend, and many friends have been divided by suspicion."

"If you know any such instance," said Oisille, "I give you my vote that you may relate it."

"I know one," said Dagoucin, "which is so strictly true that you will needs hear it with pleasure. I will tell you, ladies, when it is that a close friendship is most easily severed; 'tis when the security of friendship begins to give place to suspicion. For just as trust in a friend is the greatest honour that can be

shown him, so is doubt of him a still greater dishonour. It proves that he is deemed other than we would have him to be, and so causes many close friendships to be broken off, and friends to be turned into foes. This you will see from the story that I am minded to relate."

S. Freudeberg. Inv.

L. Byder. Sculp.

## *TALE XLVI.* (B).

*Concerning a Grey Friar who made it a great crime on the part of husbands to beat their wives.*[1]

IN the town of Angoulême, where Count Charles, father of King Francis, often abode, there dwelt a Grey Friar named De Valles,[2] the same being

[1] This is the tale inserted in Gruget's edition in lieu of the previous one.—ED.

[2] We had thought that Friar Valles might possibly be Robert de Valle, who at the close of the fifteenth century wrote a work entitled *Explanatio in Plinium*, but find that this divine was a Bishop of Rouen, and never belonged to the Grey Friars. In Gessner's *Biographia Universalis*, continued by Frisius, mention is made of three learned ecclesiastics of the name of Valle living in or about Queen Margaret's time: Baptiste de Valle, who wrote on war and duelling; William de Valle, who penned a volume entitled *De Anima Sorbonæ;* and Amant de Valle, a Franciscan minorite born at Toulouse, who was the author of numerous philosophical works, the most important being *Elucidationes Scoti.*—B. J.

a learned man and a very great preacher. At Advent time this Friar preached in the town in presence of the Count, whereby his reputation was still further increased.

It happened also that during Advent a hare-brained young fellow, who had married a passably handsome young woman, continued none the less to run at the least as dissolute a course as did those that were still bachelors. The young wife, being advised of this, could not keep silence upon it, so that she very often received payment after a different and a prompter fashion than she could have wished. For all that, she ceased not to persist in lamentation, and sometimes in railing as well; which so provoked the young man that he beat her even to bruises and blood. Thereupon she cried out yet more loudly than before; and in a like fashion all the women of the neighbourhood, knowing the reason of this, could not keep silence, but cried out publicly in the streets, saying—

"Shame, shame on such husbands! To the devil with them!"

By good fortune the Grey Friar De Valles was passing that way and heard the noise and the reason of it. He resolved to touch upon it the following day in his sermon, and did so. Turning his discourse to the subject of marriage and

the affection which ought to subsist in it, he greatly extolled that condition, at the same time censuring those that offended against it, and comparing wedded to parental love. Among other things, he said that a husband who beat his wife was in more danger, and would have a heavier punishment, than if he had beaten his father or his mother.

"For," said he, "if you beat your father or your mother you will be sent for penance to Rome; but if you beat your wife, she and all the women of the neighbourhood will send you to the devil, that is, to hell. Now look you what a difference there is between these two penances. From Rome a man commonly returns again, but from hell, oh! from that place, there is no return: *nulla est redemptio.*" [3]

After preaching this sermon, he was informed that the women were making a triumph of it,[4] and that their husbands could no longer control them. He therefore resolved to set the husbands right just as he had previously assisted their wives.

[3] This was the Pope's expression apropos of Messer Biagio, whom Michael Angelo had introduced into his "Last Judgment."—M.

[4] The French expression is *faisaient leur Achilles*, the nearest equivalent to which in English would probably be "Hectoring." It is curious that the French should have taken the name of Achilles and we that of Hector to express the same idea of arrogance and bluster.—ED.

With this intent, in one of his sermons he compared women and devil together, saying that these were the greatest enemies that man had, that they tempted him without ceasing, and that he could not rid himself of them, especially of women.

"For," said he, "as far as devils are concerned, if you show them the cross they flee away, whereas women, on the contrary, are tamed by it, and are made to run hither and thither and cause their husbands countless torments. But, good people, know you what you must do? When you find your wives afflicting you thus continually, as is their wont, take off the handle of the cross and with it drive them away. You will not have made this experiment briskly three or four times before you will find yourselves the better for it, and see that, even as the devil is driven off by the virtue of the cross, so can you drive away and silence your wives by virtue of the handle, provided only that it be not attached to the cross aforesaid."

"You have here some of the sermons by this reverend De Valles, of whose life I will with good reason relate nothing more. However, I will tell you that, whatever face he put upon the matter—and I knew him—he was much more inclined to the side of the women than to that of the men."

"Yet, madam," said Parlamente, "he did not show this in his last sermon, in which he instructed the men to ill-treat them."

"Nay, you do not comprehend his artifice," said Hircan. "You are not experienced in war and in the use of the stratagems that it requires; among these, one of the most important is to kindle strife in the camp of the enemy, whereby he becomes far easier to conquer. This master monk well knew that hatred and wrath between husband and wife most often cause a loose rein to be given to the wife's honour. And when that honour frees itself from the guardianship of virtue, it finds itself in the power of the wolf before it knows even that it is astray."

"However that may be," said Parlamente, "I could not love a man who had sown such division between my husband and myself as would lead even to blows; for beating banishes love. Yet, by what I have heard, they [the friars] can be so mincing when they seek some advantage over a woman, and so attractive in their discourse, that I feel sure there would be more danger in hearkening to them in secret than in publicly receiving blows from a husband in other respects a good one."

"Truly," said Dagoucin, "they have so revealed their plottings in all directions, that it is not without reason that they are to be feared;[b] although in my

[b] From this point the dialogue is almost word for word the same as that following Tale XLVI. (A).—ED.

opinion persons who are not suspicious are worthy of praise."

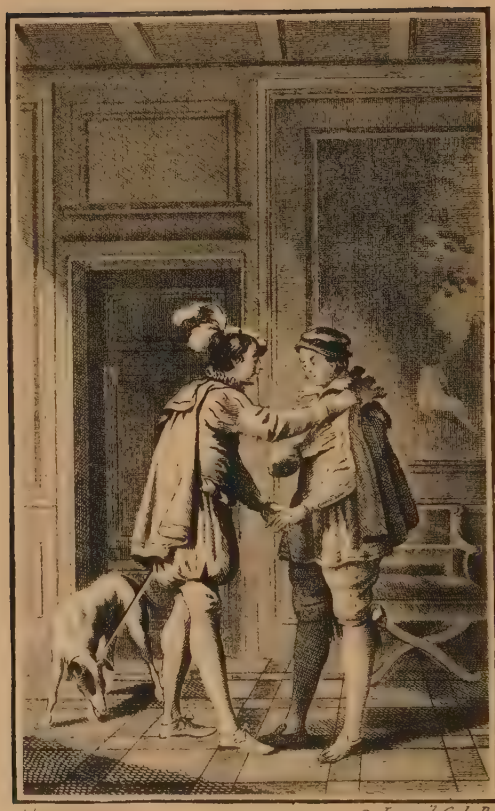
"At the same time," said Oisille, "people ought to suspect the evil that is to be avoided, for it is better to suspect an evil that does not exist than by foolish trustfulness to fall into one that does. For my part, I have never known a woman deceived by being slow to believe men's words, but many are through being too prompt in giving credence to falsehood. Therefore I say that possible evil cannot be too strongly suspected by those that have charge of men, women, cities or states; for, however good may be the watch that is kept, wickedness and treachery are prevalent enough, and for this reason the shepherd who is not vigilant will always be deceived by the wiles of the wolf."

"Still," said Dagoucin, "a suspicious person cannot have a perfect friend, and many friends have been parted by bare suspicion."

"If you should know any such instance," thereupon said Oisille, "I will give you my vote that you may relate it."

"I know one," said Dagoucin, "which is so strictly true that you will hear it with pleasure. I will tell you, ladies, when it is that close friendship is most readily broken off; it is when the security of friendship begins to give place to suspicion. For just as to trust a friend is the greatest honour one can do him, so is doubt of him the greatest dishonour, inasmuch as it proves that he is deemed other than

one would have him to be, and in this wise many close friendships are broken off and friends turned into foes. This you will see from the story that I am now about to relate."



De Longueil. G. du Roi.

## *TALE XLVII.*

*Two gentlemen lived in such perfect friendship that for a great while they had everything excepting a wife in common, until one was married, when without cause he began to suspect his companion, who, in vexation at being wrongfully suspected, withdrew his friendship, and did not rest till he had made the other a cuckold.*

NOT far from the province of Le Perche[1] there dwelt two gentlemen who from the days of their childhood had lived in such perfect friendship that they had but one heart, one house, one bed, one table, and one purse. They continued living in this perfect friendship for a long time, without there ever being between them any wish or word such as might betray that they were

[1] Between Normandy and Maine. Its chief town was Mortagne. —ED.

different persons; so truly did they live not merely like two brothers but like one individual man.

Of the two one married, yet did not on that account abate his friendship for his fellow or cease to live with him as had been his wont. And whenever they chanced to lodge where room was scanty, he failed not to make him sleep with himself and his wife;[2] though he did, in truth, himself lie in the middle. Their goods were all in common, so that neither the marriage nor aught else that might betide could impair their perfect friendship.

But after some time, worldly happiness, which is ever changeful in its nature, could no longer abide in this too happy household. The husband, without cause, lost the confidence that he had in his friend and in his wife, and, being unable to

[2] To do honour to a guest it was then a common practice to invite him to share the same bed as one s self and one's wife. In this wise, long after Queen Margaret s time, we find Louis XIII. sharing the bed of the Duke and Duchess of Luynes. Tale vii. of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (imitated in Malespini's *Ducento Novelle* and the *Joyeuses Adventures et nouvelles récréations*) relates what befell a Paris goldsmith who took a carter to bed with him and his spouse, and neglected to follow the usual custom of sleeping in the middle. In Queen Margaret's time, it may be added, the so-called "beds of honour" in the abodes of noblemen and gentlemen were large enough to accommodate four or five persons.—B. J. and ED.

conceal the truth from the latter, spoke to her with angry words. At this she was greatly amazed, for he had charged her in all things save one to treat his friend as she did himself, and now he forbade her to speak with him except it were before others. She made the matter known to her husband's friend, who did not believe her, knowing as he well did that he had never purposed doing aught to grieve his comrade. And as he was wont to hide nothing from him, he told him what he had heard, begging him not to conceal the truth, for neither in this nor in any other matter had he any desire to occasion the severance of the friendship which had so long subsisted between them.

The married gentleman assured him that he had never thought of such a thing, and that those who had spread such a rumour had foully lied.

Thereupon his comrade replied—

"I well know that jealousy is a passion as insupportable as love, and were you inclined to jealousy even with regard to myself, I should not blame you, for you could not help it. But there is a thing that is in your power of which I should have reason to complain, and that is the concealment of your distemper from me,

seeing that never before was thought, feeling or opinion concealed between us. If I were in love with your wife, you should not impute it to me as a crime, for love is not a fire that I can hold in my hand to do with it what I will; but if it were so and I concealed it from you, and sought by demonstration to make it known to your wife, I should be the wickedest comrade that ever lived.

"As far as I myself am concerned, I can truly assure you that, although she is an honourable and virtuous woman, she is the last of all the women I have ever seen upon whom, even though she were not yours, my fancy would light. But even though there be no occasion to do so, I ask you, if you have the smallest possible feeling of suspicion, to tell me of it, that I may so act as to prevent a friendship that has lasted so long from being severed for the sake of a woman. For, even if I loved her more dearly than aught in the world beside, I would never speak to her of it, seeing that I set your honour before aught else."

His comrade swore to him the strongest oaths he could muster, that he had never thought of such a thing, and begged him to act in his house as he had been used to do.

"That will I," the other replied, "but if after

this should you harbour an evil opinion of me and conceal it or bear me ill-will, I will continue no more in fellowship with you."

Some time afterwards, whilst they were living together as had been their wont, the married gentleman again fell into stronger suspicion than ever, and commanded his wife to no longer show the same countenance to his friend as before. This she at once made known to her husband's comrade, and begged that he would of his own motion abstain from holding speech with her, since she had been charged to do the like towards him.

The gentleman perceived from her words and from divers tokens on the part of his comrade that the latter had not kept his promise, and so said to him in great wrath—

"If, comrade, you are jealous, 'tis a natural thing, but, after the oaths you swore to me, I must needs be angered that you have used such concealment towards me. I had always thought that neither obstacle nor mean intervened between your heart and mine, but to my exceeding sorrow, and with no fault on my part, I see that the reverse is true. Not only are you most jealous of your wife and of me, but you seek to hide your distemper from me, until at last it must wholly turn to hate, and the dearest love

that our time has known become the deadliest enmity.

"I have done all I could to avoid this mishap, but since you suspect me of being so wicked and the opposite of what I have always proved towards you, I give you my oath and word that I will indeed be such a one as you deem me, and that I will never rest until I have had from your wife that which you believe I seek from her. So I bid you beware of me henceforward, for, since suspicion has destroyed your friendship for me, resentment will destroy mine for you."

Although his comrade tried to persuade him of the contrary, he would no longer believe him, but removed his portion of the furniture and goods that had been in common between them. And so their hearts were as widely sundered as they had before been closely united, and the unmarried gentleman never rested until, as he had promised, he had made his comrade a cuckold.[3]

"Thus, ladies, may it fare with those who wrongfully suspect their wives of evil. Many men make

[3] The idea developed in this tale, that of bringing to pass by one's own actions the thing one fears and seeks to avoid or prevent, has much analogy with that embodied in the "novel of the Curious Impertinent" which Cervantes introduces into *Don Quixote* (Part I.

of them what they suspect them to be, for a virtuous woman is more readily overcome by despair than by all the pleasures on earth. And if any one says that suspicion is love, I give him nay, for although it results from love as do ashes from fire, it kills it nevertheless in the same way."

"I do not think," said Hircan, "that anything can be more grievous to either man or woman than to be suspected of that which is contrary to fact. For my own part, nothing could more readily prompt me to sever fellowship with my friends than such suspicion."

"Nevertheless," said Oisille, "a woman is without rational excuse who revenges herself for her husband's suspicion by her own shame. It is as though a man should thrust his sword through his own body, because unable to slay his foe, or should bite his own fingers because he cannot scratch him. She would have done better had she spoken to the gentleman no more, and so shown her husband how wrongly he had suspected her; for time would have softened them both."

chaps. xxviii., xxix). In this tale it will be remembered Anselmo and Lothario are represented as being two such close friends as the gentlemen who figured in Queen Margaret's tale. Anselmo marries, however, and seized with an insane desire to test the virtue of his wife, Camilla, by exposing her to temptation, urges Lothario to pay court to her. Lothario at first resists these solicitations, pointing out the folly of such an enterprise, but his friend entreats him so pressingly that he finally consents, and in the sequel the passion which he at first simulates for Camilla becomes a real one and leads to his seducing her and carrying her away, with the result that both the wretched Anselmo and his wife soon die of grief, whilst Lothario betakes himself to the wars and perishes in battle.—M. & Ed.

"Still 'twas done like a woman of spirit," said Ennasuite. "If many women acted in the same way, their husbands would not be so outrageous as they are."

"For all that," said Longarine, "patience gives a woman the victory in the end, and chastity brings her praise, and more we should not desire."

"Nevertheless," said Ennasuite, "a woman may be unchaste and yet commit no sin."

"How may that be?" said Oisille.

"When she mistakes another man for her husband."

"And who," said Parlamente, "is so foolish that she cannot clearly tell the difference between her husband and another man, whatever disguise the latter may wear?"

"There have been and still will be," said Ennasuite, "a few deceived in this fashion, and therefore still innocent and free from sin."

"If you know of such a one," said Dagoucin, "I give you my vote that you may tell us about her, for I think it very strange that innocence and sin can go together."

"Listen, then," said Ennasuite. "If, ladies, the foregoing tales have not sufficiently warned you of the danger of lodging in our houses those who call us worldly and consider themselves as something holy and far worthier than we, I will give you yet a further instance of it, that you may see by the errors into which those fall who trust them too much that

not only are they human like others, but that there is something devilish in their nature, passing the ordinary wickedness of men. This you will learn from the following story."

## *TALE XLVIII.*

*The older and wickeder of two Grey Friars, who were lodged in an inn where the marriage of the host's daughter was being celebrated, perceived the bride being led away, whereupon he went and took the place of the bridegroom whilst the latter was still dancing with the company.*[1]

AT an inn, in a village of the land of Perigort, there was celebrated the marriage of a maiden of the house, at which all the kinsfolk and friends strove to make as good cheer as might be. On the day of the wedding there arrived at the inn two Grey Friars, to whom supper was given in

[1] We have already had an instance of a friar stealing into a wife's bed at night-time, in the husband's absence (see *ante*, vol. iii., tale xxiii.). For a similar incident see the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, No. xxx.—ED.

their own room, since it was not meet for those of their condition to be present at a wedding. However, the chief of the two, who had the greater authority and craft, resolved that, since he was shut out from the board, he would share the bed, and in this way play them one of the tricks of his trade.

When evening was come, and the dances were begun, the Grey Friar continued to observe the bride for a long time, and found her very handsome and to his taste. Then, inquiring carefully of the serving-woman concerning the room in which she was to lie, he found that it was close to his own, at which he was well pleased; and so good a watch did he keep in order to work his end, that he perceived the bride being led from the hall by the old women, as is the custom. As it was yet very early, the bridegroom would not leave the dance, in which he was so greatly absorbed that he seemed to have altogether forgotten his wife.

Not so the Friar, for, as soon as his ears told him that the bride was in bed, he put off his grey robe and went and took the husband's place. Being fearful of discovery, however, he stayed but a very short time, and then went to the end of a passage where his comrade, who was keeping watch for

him, signed to him that the husband was dancing still.

The Friar, who had not yet satisfied his wicked lust, thereupon went back to bed with the bride, until his comrade gave him a signal that it was time to leave.

The bridegroom afterwards came to bed, and his wife, who had been so tormented by the Friar that she desired naught but rest, could not help saying to him—

"Have you resolved never to sleep or do anything but torment me?"

The unhappy husband, who had but just come in, was greatly astonished at this, and asked what torment he had given her, seeing that he had not left the dance.

"A pretty dance!" said the poor girl. "This is the third time that you have come to bed. I think you would do better to sleep."

The husband was greatly astonished on hearing these words, and set aside thought of everything else in order that he might learn the truth of what had passed.

When his wife had told him the story, he at once suspected the Grey Friars who were lodged in the house, and forthwith rising, he went into their room, which was close beside his own.

Not finding them there, he began to call out for help in so loud a voice that he speedily drew together all his friends, who, when they had heard the tale, assisted him with candles, lanterns, and all the dogs of the village to hunt for the Grey Friars.

Not finding them in the house, they made all diligence, and so caught them among the vines, where they treated them as they deserved; for, after soundly beating them, they cut off their arms and legs, and left them among the vines to the care of Bacchus and Venus, of whom they had been better disciples than of St. Francis.

"Be not amazed, ladies, if such folk, being cut off from our usual mode of life, do things of which adventurers[2] even would be ashamed. Wonder rather that they do no worse when God withdraws his hand from them, for so little does the habit make the monk, that it often unmakes him through the pride it lends him. For my own part, I go not beyond the religion that is taught by St. James, who has told us to 'keep the heart pure and un-

[2] This is an allusion to the dismissed French Swiss, and German lansquenets who roamed about France in little bands, kidnapping, plundering, and at times hiring themselves out as spadassins. These men, the pests of the country, were commonly known by the name of adventurers.—B. J.

spotted toward God, and to show all charity to our neighbours.'"[3]

"Heavens!" said Oisille, "shall we never have done with tales about these tiresome Grey Friars?"

Then said Ennasuite—

"If, ladies, princes and gentlemen are not spared, the Grey Friars, it seems to me, are highly honoured by being noticed. They are so useless that, were it not that they often do evil things worthy of remembrance, they would never even be mentioned; and, as the saying goes, it is better to do evil than to do nothing at all. Besides, the more varied the flowers the handsomer will our posy be."

"If you will promise not to be angry with me," said Hircan, "I will tell you the story of a great lady whose wantonness was so extreme that you will forgive the poor friar for having taken what he needed, where he was able to find it, seeing that she, who had enough to eat, nevertheless sought for dainties in too monstrous a fashion."

"Since we have sworn to speak the truth," said Oisille, "we have also sworn to hear it. You may therefore speak with freedom, for the evil things that we tell of men and women are not uttered to shame those that are spoken of in the story, but to take away all trust in created beings, by revealing

[3] "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world."—*James* i. 27.—ED.

the trouble to which these are liable, and this to the end that we may fix and rest our hope on Him alone who is perfect, and without whom every man is only imperfection."

"Well then," said Hircan, "I will relate my story without fear."

## *TALE XLIX.*

*Some French gentlemen, perceiving that the King their master was exceedingly well treated by a foreign Countess whom he loved, ventured to speak to her, and sought her with such success, that one after another they had from her what they desired, each, however, believing that he alone possessed the happiness in which all the others shared. And this being discovered by one of their number, they all plotted together to be revenged on her; but, as she showed a fair countenance and treated them no worse than before, they brought away in their own bosoms the shame which they had thought to bring upon her.*[1]

AT the Court of King Charles—which Charles I shall not mention, for the sake of the lady of whom I wish to speak, and whom I shall not call by her own name—there was a Countess of excellent lineage,[2] but a foreigner. And as novelties ever

[1] The incidents here related must have occurred during the reign of Charles VIII., probably in or about 1490.—L.

[2] This Countess cannot be identified. She was probably the wife

please, this lady, both for the strangeness of her attire and for its exceeding richness, was observed by all. Though she was not to be ranked among the most beautiful, she possessed gracefulness, together with a noble assurance that could not be surpassed; and, moreover, her manner of speech and her seriousness were to match, so that there was none but feared to accost her excepting the King, who loved her exceedingly. That he might have still more intimate converse with her, he gave some mission to the Count, her husband, which kept him away for a long time, and meanwhile the King made right good cheer with his wife.

Several of the King's gentlemen, knowing that their master was well treated by her, took courage to speak to her, and among the rest was one called Astillon,[3] a bold man and graceful of bearing.

of one of the many Italian noblemen, like the Caraccioli and San Severini, who entered the French service about the time of the conquest of Naples. Brantôme alludes to the story in his *Dames Galantes* (Fourth Discourse) but gives no names.—ED.

[3] This is James de Chastillon, not, however, J. Gaucher de Chastillon, "King of Yvetot," as M. de Lincy supposes, but J. de Coligny-Chastillon, as has been pointed out by M. Frank. Brantôme devotes the Nineteenth Discourse of his *Capitaines françois* to this personage, and says: "He had been one of the great favourites and *mignons* of King Charles VIII., even at the time of the journey to the kingdom of Naples; and 'twas then said, 'Chastillon, Bourdillon and Bonneval [see *post*, note 5] govern the

At first she treated him so seriously, threatening to tell of him to the King his master, that he well-nigh became afraid of her. However, as he had not been wont to fear the threats even of the most redoubtable captains, he would not suffer himself to be moved by hers, but pressed her so closely that she at last consented to speak with him in private, and taught him the manner in which he should come to her apartment. This he failed not to do, and, in order that the King might be without suspicion of the truth, he craved permission to go on a journey, and set out from the Court. On the very first day, however, he left all his following and returned at night to receive fulfilment of the promises that the Countess had made him. These she kept so much to his satisfaction, that he was content to remain shut up in a closet for five or six days, without once going out, and living only on restoratives.

During the week that he lay in hiding, one of his companions called Durassier[4] made love to

royal blood.'" Wounded in April 1512 at the battle of Ravenna, "the most bloody battle of the century," he was removed to Ferrara, where he died (May 25). He was the second husband of Blanche de Tournon, Lady of Honour to Queen Margaret, respecting whom see *ante*, vol. i. pp. 84–5, 122–4, and vol. iv. p. 144, note 2.—L., F. and ED.

[4] This in all probability is the doughty James Galliot de Genouillac, who—much in the same way as in our own times the

the Countess. At the beginning she spoke to this new lover, as she had spoken to the first, with harsh and haughty speech that grew milder day by day, insomuch that when the time was come for dismissing the first prisoner, she put the second into his place. While he was there, another companion of his, named Valnebon,[5] did

names of the "Iron Duke" and the "Man of Iron" have been bestowed on Wellington and Bismarck—was called by his contemporaries the "Seigneur d'Acier" or "Steel Lord," whence "Durassier"—hard steel. Born in Le Quercy in or about 1466, Genouillac accompanied Charles VIII. on his Italian expeditions, and, according to Brantôme, surpassed all others in valour and influence. He greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Fornova (1495), and in 1515 we find him one of the chief commanders of the French artillery. For the great skill he displayed at Marignano he was appointed Grand Master of the Artillery and Seneschal of Armagnac, and he subsequently became Grand Equerry of France. At Pavia, where he again commanded the artillery, he would have swept away the Spaniards had not the French impetuously charged upon them, preventing him from firing his pieces. Most of the latter he contrived to save, severe as was the defeat, and he effectually protected the retreat of the Duke of Alençon and the Count of Clermont into France. Genouillac died in 1546, a year after he had been appointed Governor of Languedoc. — B. J. and Ed.

[5] Valnebon is an anagram of the name Bonneval, and Queen Margaret evidently refers here to a member of the Bonneval family. In the time of Charles VIII. this illustrious Limousin house had two principal members, Anthony, one of the leading counsellors of that king (as of his predecessor Louis XI. and his successor Louis XII.), and Germain, also a royal counsellor and chamberlain. The heroes of the above story being military men and old friends and comrades, it is probable that the reference is to Germain de Bonneval, he, like Chastillon and Genouillac, having accompanied Charles VIII. on his expedition into Italy. Germain de Bonneval, moreover, was one of the seven noblemen who fought at the battle

the same as the former two, and after these there came yet two or three more to lodge in the sweet prison.

This manner of life continued for a long time, and was so skilfully contrived that none of the lovers knew aught of the others; and although they were aware of the love that each of them bore the lady, there was not one but believed himself to be the only successful suitor, and laughed at his comrades who, as he thought, had failed to win such great happiness.

One day when the gentlemen aforesaid were at a banquet where they made right good cheer, they began to speak of their several fortunes and of the prisons in which they had lain during the wars. Valnebon, however, who found it a hard task to conceal the great good fortune he had met with, began saying to his comrades—

"I know not what prisons have been yours, but for my own part, for love of one wherein I once lay, I shall all my life long give praise and honour to the rest. I think that no pleasure on earth comes near that of being kept a prisoner."

Astillon, who had been the first captive, had

of Fornova, clad and armed exactly like the French king. He perished at the memorable defeat of Pavia in 1525. From him descended, in a direct line, the famous eighteenth century adventurer, Claud Alexander, Count de Bonneval.—B. J. and Ed.

a suspicion of the prison that he meant, and replied—

"What gaoler, Valnebon, man or woman, treated you so well that you became so fond of your prison?"

"Whoever the gaoler may have been," said Valnebon, "my prisonment was so pleasant that I would willingly have had it last longer. Never was I better treated or more content."

Durassier, who was a man of few words, clearly perceived that they were discussing the prison in which he had shared like the rest; so he said to Valnebon—

"On what meats were you fed in the prison that you praise so highly?"

"What meats?" said Valnebon. "The King himself has none better or more nourishing."

"But I should also like to know," said Durassier, "whether your keeper made you earn your bread properly?"

Valnebon, suspecting that he had been understood, could not hold from swearing.

"God's grace!" said he. "Had I indeed comrades where I believed myself alone?"

Perceiving this dispute, wherein he had part like the rest, Astillon laughed and said—

"We all serve one master, and have been comrades and friends from boyhood; if, then,

we are comrades in the same good fortune, we can but laugh at it. But, to see whether what I imagine be true, pray let me question you, and do you confess the truth to me; for if that which I fancy has befallen us, it is as amusing an adventure as could be found in any book."

They all swore to tell the truth if the matter were such as they could not deny.

Then said he to them—

"I will tell you my own fortune, and you will tell me, ay or nay, if yours has been the same."

To this they all agreed, whereupon he said—

"I asked leave of the King to go on a journey."

"So," they replied, "did we."

"When I was two leagues from the Court, I left all my following and went and yielded myself up prisoner."

"We," they replied, "did the same."

"I remained," said Astillon, "for seven or eight days, and lay in a closet where I was fed on nothing but restoratives and the choicest viands that I ever ate. At the end of a week, those who held me captive suffered me to depart much weaker in body than I had been on my arrival."

They all swore that the like had happened to them.

"My imprisonment," said Astillon, "began on such a day and finished on such another."

"Mine," thereupon said Durassier, "began on the very day that yours ended, and lasted until such a day."

Valnebon, who was losing patience, began to swear.

"'Sblood!" said he, "from what I can see, I, who thought myself the first and only one, was the third, for I went in on such a day and came out on such another."

Three others, who were at the table, swore that they had followed in like order.

"Well, since that is so," said Astillon, "I will mention the condition of our gaoler. She is married, and her husband is a long way off."

"'Tis even she," they all replied.

"Well, to put us out of our pain," said Astillon, "I, who was first enrolled, shall also be the first to name her. It was my lady the Countess, she who was so extremely haughty that in conquering her affection I felt as though I had conquered Cæsar."

[Said Valnebon—[6]]

[6] It is probable that the angry Valnebon is speaking here, and that his name has been accidentally omitted from the MSS. At all events the three subsequent paragraphs show that these remarks are not made by Astillon, who declines the other speaker's advice, and proposes a scheme of his own.—ED.

"To the devil with the jade, who gave us so much toil, and made us believe ourselves so fortunate in winning her! Never was there such wantonness, for while she kept one in hiding she was practising upon another, so that she might never be without diversion. I would rather die than suffer her to go unpunished."

Each thereupon asked him what he thought ought to be done to her, saying that they were all ready to do it.

"I think," said he, "that we ought to tell the King our master, who prizes her as though she were a goddess.

"By no means," said Astillon; "we are ourselves able to take vengeance upon her, without calling in the aid of our master. Let us all be present to-morrow when she goes to mass, each of us wearing an iron chain about his neck. Then, when she enters the church, we will greet her as shall be fitting."

This counsel was highly approved by the whole company, and each provided himself with an iron chain. The next morning they all went, dressed in black and with their iron chains twisted like collars round their necks, to meet the Countess as she was going to church. And as soon as she saw them thus attired, she began to laugh and asked them—

"Whither go such doleful folk?"

"Madam," said Astillon, "we are come to attend you as poor captive slaves constrained to do your service."

The Countess, feigning not to understand, replied—

"You are not my captives, and I cannot understand that you have more occasion than others to do me service."

Thereupon Valnebon stepped forward and said to her—

"After eating your bread for so long a time, we should be ungrateful indeed if we did not serve you."

She made excellent show of not understanding the matter, thinking by this seriousness to confound them; but they pursued their discourse in such sort that she saw that all was discovered. So she immediately devised a means of baffling them, for, having lost honour and conscience, she would in no wise take to herself the shame that they thought to bring upon her. On the contrary, like one who set her pleasure before all earthly honour, she neither changed her countenance nor treated them worse than before, whereat they were so confounded, that they carried away in their own bosoms the shame they had thought to bring upon her.

"If, ladies, you do not consider this story enough to prove that women are as bad as men, I will seek out others of the same kind to relate to you. Nevertheless I think that this one will suffice to show you that a woman who has lost shame is far bolder to do evil than a man."

There was not a woman in the company that heard this story, who did not make as many signs of the cross as if all the devils in hell were before her eyes. However, Oisille said—

"Ladies, let us humble ourselves at hearing of so terrible a circumstance, and the more so as she who is forsaken by God becomes like him with whom she unites; for even as those who cleave to God have His spirit within them, so is it with those that cleave to His opposite, whence it comes that nothing can be more brutish than one devoid of the Spirit of God."

"Whatever the poor lady may have done," said Ennasuite, "I nevertheless cannot praise the men who boasted of their imprisonment."

"It is my opinion," said Longarine, "that a man finds it as troublesome to conceal his good fortune as to pursue it. There is never a hunter but delights to wind his horn over his quarry, nor lover but would fain have credit for his conquest."

"That," said Simontault, "is an opinion which I would hold to be heretical in presence of all the Inquisitors of the Faith, for there are more men than women that can keep a secret, and I know right well that some might be found who would rather forego

their happiness than have any human being know of it. For this reason has the Church, like a wise mother, ordained men to be confessors and not women, seeing that the latter can conceal nothing."

"That is not the reason," said Oisille; "it is because women are such enemies of vice that they would not grant absolution with the same readiness as is shown by men, and would be too stern in their penances."

"If they were as stern in their penances," said Dagoucin, "as they are in their responses, they would reduce far more sinners to despair than they would draw to salvation; and so the Church has in every sort well ordained. But, for all that, I will not excuse the gentlemen who thus boasted of their prison, for never was a man honoured by speaking evil of a woman."

"Since they all fared alike," said Hircan, "it seems to me that they did well to console one another."

"Nay," said Geburon, "they should never have acknowledged it for the sake of their own honour. The books of the Round Table[7] teach us that it is not to the honour of a worthy knight to overcome one that is good for naught."

[7] Queen Margaret was well acquainted with these (see *ante*, vol. iii. p. 48). In a list drawn up after her father's death, of the two hundred volumes of books in his library, a most remarkable one for the times, we find specified several copies of "Lancelot," "Tristan," &c., some in MS. with miniatures and illuminated letters, and others printed on parchment. Besides numerous religious writings, volumes of Aristotle, Ovid, Mandeville, Dante,

"I am amazed," said Longarine, "that the unhappy woman did not die of shame in presence of her captives."

"Those who have lost shame," said Oisille, "can hardly ever recover it, excepting, however, she that has forgotten it through deep love. Of such have I seen many return."

"I think," said Hircan, "that you must have seen the return of as many as went, for deep love in a woman is difficult to find."

"I am not of your opinion," said Longarine; "I think that there are some women who have loved to death."

"So exceedingly do I desire to hear a tale of that kind," said Hircan, "that I give you my vote in order to learn of a love in women that I had never deemed them to possess."

"Well, if you hearken," said Longarine, "you will believe, and will see that there is no stronger passion than love. But while it prompts one to almost impossible enterprises for the sake of winning some portion of happiness in this life, so does it more than any other passion reduce that man or woman

the Chronicles of St. Denis, and the "Book of the Great Khan, bound in cloth of gold," the library contained various works of a character akin to that of the *Heptameron*. For instance, a copy of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* in print; a French translation of Poggio's *Facetiæ*, also in print, and two copies of Boccaccio in MS., one of them bound in purple velvet, and richly illuminated, each page having a border of blue and silver. This last if still in existence would be very valuable.—ED.

to despair, who loses the hope of gaining what is longed for. This indeed you will see from the following story."

## *TALE L.*

*Messire John Peter for a long time wooed in vain a neighbour of his by whom he was sorely smitten, and to divert his humour withdrew for a few days from the sight of her; but this brought so deep a melancholy upon him that the doctors ordered him to be bled. The lady, who knew whence his distemper proceeded, then thought to save his life, but did indeed hasten his death, by granting him that which she had always refused. Then, reflecting that she was herself the cause of the loss of so perfect a lover, she dealt herself a sword-thrust that made her a partner in his fate.*[1]

IN the town of Cremona not long ago there lived a gentleman called Messire John Peter,[2] who had long loved a lady that dwelt near to his own house; but strive as he might he was never able to have of her the reply that he desired, albeit he

[1] The incidents here narrated probably occurred in or about 1544.—L.

[2] "Jehan Piètre" (Pietro) in the MSS.—ED.

loved her with his whole heart. Being greatly grieved and troubled at this, the poor gentleman withdrew into his lodging with the resolve that he would no longer vainly pursue the happiness the quest of which was devouring his life; and accordingly, to divert his humour, he passed a few days without seeing her. This caused him to fall into deep sadness, so that his countenance was no longer the same. His kinsfolk summoned the doctors, who, finding that his face was growing yellow, thought that he had some obstruction of the liver and ordered a blood-letting.

The lady, who had dealt so sternly with him, knew very well that his sickness was caused by her refusal alone, and she sent to him an old woman in whom she trusted, to tell him that, since she saw his love to be genuine and unfeigned, she was now resolved to grant him all that which she had refused him so long. She had therefore devised a means to leave her house and go to a place where he might privately see her.

The gentleman, who that same morning had been bled in the arm, found himself better cured by this message than by any medicine or blood-letting he could have had, and he sent word that he would be at the place without fail at the hour she had appointed. He added that

she had wrought an evident miracle, since with one word she had cured a man of a sickness for which all the doctors were not able to find a remedy.

The longed-for evening being come, the gentleman repaired to the appointed place with such extreme joy as must needs come soon to an end, since increase of it were not possible. He had waited but a short time after his arrival, when she whom he loved more dearly than his own soul came to meet him. He did not occupy himself with making long speeches, for the fire that consumed him prompted him to seek with all speed that which he could scarcely believe to be at last within his power. But whilst, intoxicated beyond measure with love and joy, he was in one direction seeking a cure that would give him life, he brought to pass in another the hastening of his death; for, heedless of himself for his sweetheart's sake, he perceived not that his arm became unbound, and that the newly-opened wound discharged so much blood that he was, poor gentleman, completely bathed in it. Thinking, however, that his weakness had been caused by his excess, he bethought himself of returning home.

Then love, which had too closely united them, so dealt with him that, as he was parting from his

sweetheart, his soul parted from his body, and, by reason of his great loss of blood, he fell dead at his lady's feet.

She, on her side, stood there in astonishment, contemplating the loss of so perfect a lover, of whose death she had herself been the sole cause. Reflecting, on the other hand, on the shame and sorrow that would be hers if the dead body were found in her house, she carried it, with a serving-woman whom she trusted, into the street in order that the matter might not be known. Nevertheless, she felt that she could not leave it there alone. Taking up the dead man's sword, she was fain to share his fate, and, indeed, to punish her heart, which had been the cause of all his woe, she pierced it through and through, so that her dead body fell upon that of her lover.

When her father and mother came out of their house in the morning, they found this pitiful sight, and, after making such mourning as was natural, they buried the lovers together.

"Thus, ladies, may it be seen that excessive love brings with it other woe."

"This is what I like to see," said Simontault, "a love so equal that when one died the other could not live. Had I, by the grace of God, found such a mistress, I think that none could ever have loved her more perfectly than I."

"Yet am I of opinion," said Parlamente, "that you would not have been so blinded by love as not to bind up your arm better than he did. The days are gone when men were wont to forget their lives for the ladies' sake."

"But those are not gone," said Simontault, "when ladies are apt to forget their lovers' lives for their pleasure's sake."

"I think," said Ennasuite, "that there is no living woman that can take pleasure in the death of a man, no, not even though he were her enemy. Still, if men will indeed kill themselves, the ladies cannot prevent them."

"Nevertheless," said Saffredent, "she that denies the gift of bread to a poor starving man is held to be a murderess."

"If your requests," said Oisille, "were as reasonable as those of a poor man seeking to supply his needs, it would be over cruel of the ladies to refuse you. God be thanked, however, your sickness kills none but such as must of necessity die within the year."

"I do not understand, madam," said Saffredent, "that there can be any greater need than that which causes all others to be forgotten. When love is deep, no bread and no meat whatsoever can be thought of save the glance and speech of the woman whom one loves."

"If you were allowed to fast," said Oisille, "with no other meat but that, you would tell a very different tale."

"I acknowledge," he replied, "that the body might fail, but not so the heart and will."

"Then," said Parlamente, "God has dealt very mercifully with you in leading you to have recourse to a quarter where you find such little contentment that you must needs console yourself with eating and drinking. Methinks in these matters you acquit yourself so well, that you should praise God for the tenderness of His cruelty."

"I have been so nurtured in torment," he replied, "that I am beginning to be well pleased with woes of which other men complain."

"Perhaps," said Longarine, "our complaints debar you from company where your gladness makes you welcome; for nothing is so vexatious as an importunate lover."

"Say, rather," answered Simontault, "'as a cruel lady——'"

"I clearly see," said Oisille, "now that the matter touches Simontault, that, if we stay until he brings his reasonings to an end, we shall find ourselves at complines[3] rather than vespers. Let us, therefore, go and praise God that this day has passed without graver dispute."

She was the first to rise, and all the others followed her, but Simontault and Longarine ceased not to carry on their quarrel, yet so gently that, without drawing of sword, Simontault won the victory, and proved that the strongest passion was the sorest need.

[3] The last division in the Roman Catholic breviary.—ED.

At this point they entered the church, where the monks were waiting for them.

Having heard vespers, they went to sup as much off words as meat, for their converse lasted as long as they were at table, and throughout the evening also, until Oisille told them that they might well retire and give some rest to their minds. The five days that were past had been filled with such brave stories, that she had great fear lest the sixth should not be equal to them; for, even if they were to invent their tales, it was not possible to tell any better than those true ones which had already been related in the company.

Geburon, however, told her that, so long as the world lasted, things would happen worthy of remembrance.

"For," said he, "the wickedness of wicked men is always what it has been, as also is the goodness of the good. So long as wickedness and good reign upon earth, they will ever fill it with fresh actions, although it be written that there is nothing new under the sun.[4] But we, who have not been summoned to the intimate counsels of God, and who are ignorant of first causes, deem all new things noteworthy in proportion as we would not or could not ourselves accomplish them. So, be not afraid that the days to come will not be in keeping with those that are past, and be sure that on your own part you perform well your duty."

[4] *Ecclesiastes* i. 9, 10.—M.

Oisille replied that she commended herself to God, and in His name she bade them good-night.

So all the company withdrew, thus bringing to an end the Fifth Day.

# APPENDIX.

## A.

### (TALE XXXVI., Page 63.)

THE following are the more important particulars, supplied by M. Jules Roman, with reference to President Charles of Grenoble :—

Jeffroy Charles was an Italian, born in the marquisate of Saluzza, where his father, Constant, had been a distinguished jurisconsult. The hero of Queen Margaret's xxxvith tale always signed his name Jeffroy Charles, but his descendants adopted the spelling Carles. Doubtless the name had originally been Caroli. Before fixing himself in France, Jeffroy Charles had been in the service of Luigi II., Marquis of Saluzza, who had appointed him to the office of "Podesta" and entrusted him with various diplomatic missions to the French Court (see *Discorsi sopre alcune famiglie nobili del Piemonte* by Francesco Agostini della Chiesa, in MS. in the State Archives, at Turin). At the time when Charles VIII. was planning his expedition to Naples, he gave a cordial greeting to all the Italians who presented themselves at his Court, and, securing the services of Jeffroy Charles, he appointed him counsellor of the Parliament of Grenoble (October 5, 1493), and entrusted him with various secret missions, the result being that he sojourned but unfrequently in Dauphiné. On the death of Charles VIII., Jeffroy secured the good graces of his

successor, Louis XII., and was appointed (June 16, 1500) President of the Senate of Turin, and some months later Chief President of the Parliament of Grenoble. Charles spent the greater part of that year on missions, both to the Court of the Emperor Maximilian and that of the Pope. It was he who obtained from the former the investiture of Louis XII. as Duke of Milan, which afterwards led to so much warfare. Most of the following years he spent at Milan, seeking to organise the government of the duchy, and contending against the rapacity of both the French and the Italian nobles. In 1508 he was sent by Louis XII. to Cambrai, in company with Cardinal d'Amboise, to conclude an alliance with the Emperor against Venice, and he also repaired the same year to Rome with Marshal Trivulzio to negotiate the Pope's entry into this league.

On war being declared, he set aside his judicial robes, and took an active part in the campaign against Venice, fighting so bravely at Agnadel that Louis XII. knighted him on the battle-field. His last diplomatic mission was to the Court of Leo X. in 1515, in which year he was, on account of his great learning, appointed to direct the education of the King's younger daughter, the celebrated Renée of Ferrara. But it is doubtful whether he ever even entered upon these duties, since he died soon after he had been entrusted with them. His family remained in Dauphiné, where it died out, obscurely, during the seventeenth century. Only one of his sons, Anthony, evinced any talent, becoming counsellor of the Rouen Parliament (1519), and ambassador at Milan (1530). Lancelot de Carles, Bishop of Riez, was not, as some biographers assert, a son of Jeffroy Charles, nor was he, it would seem, in any way connected with the Saluzza family.

Jeffroy Charles's wife, Margaret du Mottet, had borne him eight children before he surprised her in adultery. After the tragical ending of his conjugal mishaps he adopted as his crest the figure of an angel holding the forefinger of one hand to his mouth as if to enjoin secrecy.[1] In the seventeenth century this

[1] The suggestion here presents itself that, apart from the question of any crime, this emblem of secrecy was a very fitting one for a diplomatist to assume.—Ed.

"angel of silence" was to be seen, carved in stone, and serving as a support of the Charles escutcheon, on the house where the President had resided in the Rue des Clercs at Grenoble (Guy Allard's *Dictionnaire du Dauphiné*, &c., Grenoble 1695). Escutcheon and support have nowadays disappeared, but on certain of Charles's seals, as well as in books that belonged to him, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the emblem of the angel will still be found. The earliest seal on which we find it is one affixed to a receipt dated from Milan, July 31, 1506. Assuming that he adopted this crest in memory of the events narrated by Queen Margaret, it is probable that the latter occurred in the earlier part of 1506 or the latter part of the previous year.[2]

Three copies of a medal showing Charles's energetic, angular profile, with the inscription *Jafredus Karoli jurisconsultus preses Delphinatus et Mediolani*, are known to exist; one in the Grenoble museum, one in that of Milan, and one in my (M. Roman's) collection. Three MS. works from the President's library are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The frontispiece of one of these (MSS. Lat. No. 4801) is a miniature painting of his escutcheon, surmounted by the half-length figure of the "angel of silence," who is clad in dark blue, with wings of red, green and blue feathers. On folio 74 of the same MS. is a full-length figure of the angel, clad in light blue and supporting Charles's escutcheon with one hand, whilst the forefinger of the other is pressed to his lips. In the libraries of Lyons, Grenoble and Turin are other richly-illuminated works that belonged to the President, who was a distinguished bibliophilist and great patron of letters, several learned Italian writers, and among others, J. P. Parisio, J. M. Cattaneo and Franchino Gafforio, having dedicated their principal works to him. He it was, moreover, who saved the life of Aldo Manuzio, the famous Venetian printer, when he was arrested by the French as a spy in 1506.

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[2] That is, twenty years after the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, from which some commentators think the *Heptameron* story to have been borrowed, was first printed.—ED.

From the foregoing particulars it will be seen that President Charles was alike learned, brave and skilful. But for the Queen of Navarre's circumstantial narrative it would be hard to believe that a man with so creditable a public record killed his wife by means of a salad of poisonous herbs.—ED.

END OF VOL. IV

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